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**KLADENÍ OTÁZEK JAKO EFEKTIVNÍ
STRATEGIE KE ZLEPŠENÍ ČTENÍ
S POROZUMĚNÍM V HODINÁCH
ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA**

**QUESTIONING AS AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY
FOR IMPROVING READING
COMPREHENSION IN EFL CLASSES**

Diplomová práce: 12–FP–KAJ– 147

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Podpis:

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Počet

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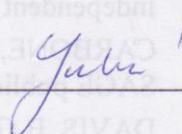
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ČTENÍ S POROZUMĚNÍM V HODINÁCH ANGLICKÉHO
JAZYKA

Vedoucí práce: PaedDr. Zuzana Šaffková, CSc., M.A.

Cíl: Diplomová práce zahrnuje akademický výzkum a praktické ověření teorie dovednosti čtení a významu kladení otázek při práci s texty. Cílem je prokázat, že vhodný výběr otázek a jejich náležité zařazení do procesu čtení může vést studenty ke kritickému a reflektivnímu myšlení a tím cíleně podpořit jejich schopnost porozumět danému anglickému textu. Zpracování praktického projektu, analýza a interpretace výsledků v uvedené diplomové práci prokáží porozumění metodám analýzy teoretických východisek a jejich kritického zhodnocení a schopnost využití teoretických závěrů při volbě vhodných metod při výuce cizího jazyka. Posouzení efektivnosti teorie a zvolených metodických postupů v praxi dále ukáže schopnost využití evaluace jako nezbytné strategie hodnocení celého výzkumu. Specifikou uvedeného projektu je zpracování přehledu vhodných otázek a jejich význam pro detailní porozumění textu a jejich ověření v praxi.

Požadavky: Platnost hypotézy diplomové práce bude ověřena v hodinách anglického jazyka na některé ze základních škol.

Metody: Na základě studia odborné a metodologické literatury jsou vypracovány návrhy plánů hodin anglického jazyka, jejichž účinnost je detailně vyhodnocena pomocí metod kvalitativního výzkumu.

Literatura: GOWER, R., PHILLIPS, D., WALTERS, S. Teaching Practice Handbook Oxford : Heinemann, 1995.
HARMER, J. The Practice of English Language Teaching London : Longman, 2001.
COTTRELL, S. Critical thinking skills, Developing Effective Analysis and Argument New York: Palcrave Macmillan 2005.
BLOOM, B.S. Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Addison Wesley, 1956.
BLACHOWICZ, Ogle, C.L.Z., D. Reading Comprehension : Strategies for Independent Learners. 2nd edition. Guilford Press, 2008.
CARBONE, E.L. Teaching large classes : tools and strategies. London : SAGE publications, 1998.
DAVIS, B.G. Tools for Teaching. 2nd edition. California : John Wiley and Sons, 2009.

Čestné prohlášení

Název práce: Kladení otázek jako efektivní strategie ke zlepšení čtení
s porozuměním v hodinách anglického jazyka
Questioning as an Effective Strategy for Improving Reading
Comprehension in EFL Classes

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Poděkování

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis was to verify the hypothesis that using appropriately chosen, formulated and sequenced questions that fit particular learning situations can involve the learners into the reading process effectively and help them better understand a text. The project was designed and afterwards administered to eighth grade pupils of the English classes at the elementary school of Kynšperk nad Ohří. The project consisted of three different reading activities designed according to the three-stage model of teaching reading. For each stage of the reading activity a variety of stimulating questions, designated for before, during and after reading phases had been designed. These questions were based on the theoretical and methodological principles of effective practises for developing reading comprehension. The effectiveness of the reading activities, to which specifically designed questions were applied, was evaluated by means of the methods of qualitative research, including reflections on each lesson and a questionnaire for the students. These confirmed that using appropriately chosen, formulated and sequenced questions that fit particular learning situations contributed to the students' better understanding of the text and developing their reading comprehension.

Cílem této práce bylo ověřit hypotézu, že pomocí vhodně zvolené, vhodně formulované a zároveň vhodně zařazené otázky, která odpovídá konkrétní výukové situaci, mohou být žáci efektivněji zapojeni do procesu čtení a zároveň tak lépe porozumět textu. Projekt byl navržen a následně testován v osmém ročníku základní školy v Kynšperku nad Ohří během hodin anglického jazyka. Projekt se skládal ze tří různých čtecích aktivit, vytvořených podle třífázového modelu výuky čtení. Pro každou fázi čtecí aktivity bylo navrženo množství stimulujících otázek, které byly kladeny „před“, „během“ a „po“ čtení. Tyto otázky byly založeny na teoretických a metodologických principech efektivního nácviku rozvoje čtení s porozuměním. Efektivita čtecích aktivit, na které byly speciálně navržené otázky použity, byla hodnocena pomocí metod kvalitativního výzkumu, včetně reflexí ke každé proběhlé hodině a dotazníků pro žáky. Tyto hodnotící metody prokázaly, že pomocí vhodně zvolené a vhodně načasované

otázky odpovídající konkrétní výukové situaci, můžeme u žáků přispět k jejich lepšímu porozumění textu a rozvíjet tak jejich schopnost čtení s porozuměním.

Das Ziel dieser Arbeit war es, die These zu bestätigen, dass die Anwendung richtig gewählter, formulierter und aufeinander abgestimmter Fragen, die zu bestimmten Lernsituationen passen, die Lernenden effektiv in den Leseprozess einbinden, und ihnen helfen kann, einen Text besser zu verstehen. Das Projekt wurde zusammen gestellt und danach an Schülern der achten Klasse der Grundschule Kynšperk nad Ohří im Englischunterricht erprobt. Das Projekt setzte sich aus drei verschiedenen Leseaktivitäten zusammen, die dem Drei-Stufen-Modell des Lehrens des Lesens entsprachen. Für jede Lesestufe wurde eine Vielzahl von stimulierenden Fragen für die Zeit vor, während und nach den Lesephasen entworfen. Diese Fragen beruhten auf den theoretischen und methodologischen Prinzipien effektiver Praktiken zur Entwicklung des Leseverständnisses. Die Effektivität des Lesevorganges wurde mit speziell formulierten Fragen gemessen und mit der Methode der quantitativen Forschung ausgewertet, wozu auch das Nachdenken der Schüler über den Lesestoff und ein von den Schülern auszufüllender Fragebogen gehörten. Es konnte nachgewiesen werden, dass die Anwendung richtig gewählter, formulierter und aufeinander abgestimmter Fragen, die zu bestimmten Lernsituationen passen, den Schülern helfen, einen Text besser zu verstehen und ihre Lesefähigkeit zu entwickeln.

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I. Theory

A. Reading in people's lives

German scientist, satirist and anglophile Georg Christoph Lichtenberg said: „*Reading means borrowing*”. This simple but meaningful statement expresses the fundamental conception of reading. The ability of reading opens up new worlds and opportunities. It enables people to gain new knowledge and perspective.

First of all we read to obtain information. For example, we can obtain information necessary for of our everyday lives through reading newspapers, letters, instruction manuals, maps, telephone directory, labels on various products from a medicine bottle to an instant soup. These daily opportunities to read are evoked by „authentic reasons for reading. “ We read because we want to obtain something from a text: facts, information, or instructions.

However, we also read just for pleasure and enjoyment. Reading as enjoyable activity has attracted people all over the world from the ancient times when the system of writing was discovered as a code for oral expressions till nowadays. Reading for pleasure involves a wide range of texts like novels, tragedies, comedies, poems or travel and history books. People read all of them to be amused or relaxed. To sum up, reading can be defined as a specific way of getting information from a written discourse for different purposes; to get specific information as a necessary activity or to be pleased by the text as a leisure interest.

B. Reading in a foreign language

Although people start to read in their mother tongue, later as they gain formal education they have to read also in a foreign language. To be able to read in a foreign language effectively, the learner should master, apart from decoding written words, a lot of skills and competences. They include not only language skills but also some background knowledge.

1. Language knowledge

„One of the prerequisites for satisfactory communication is that the writer and the reader share the same code – the language of the text“ (Nuttall, 1982, p. 6). In order to understand a text, readers need to know especially the meanings of individual words. Naggy and Herman (1985, p. 304-30) claim that „readers construct understanding of a text by assembling and making sense of the words in context so vocabulary and especially the meaning of words is crucial to reading comprehension“. Besides knowledge of vocabulary readers need to know the rules and principles of a language. It means knowledge about linguistic facts, which means grammar and its core components such as morphology, syntax and semantics. Language knowledge is the prior aspect of understanding the written text, but not the sole. To understand the written discourse well, it is important for the reader to have also background knowledge.

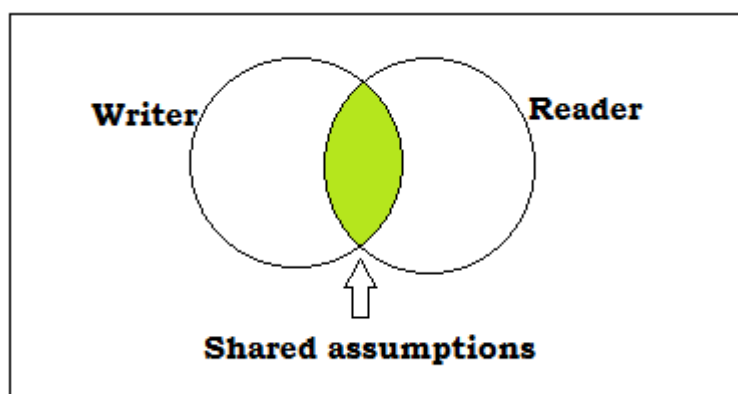
2. Background knowledge

Although readers' linguistic competence is important, we cannot read effectively if we do not understand historical, social and cultural context, because „the meanings of words and sentences are acquired in a certain circumstance of culture“ (Phillips 1984, p. 17). Cultural and historical background knowledge is therefore necessary for understanding the message we are receiving from the text. Understanding the cultural context of what one reads is a significant factor in reading comprehension. Without sufficient background knowledge of social and historical culture, the readers can not comprehend the deep meaning of texts.

Anderson (1977, p. 14) points out that „every stage of comprehension involves reader’s background knowledge of culture.“ Some of these texts, according to him, may contain references to situations, objects and experiences that are unfamiliar to non-native speakers. Readers can be easily confused by all these references and thus they can fail on comprehension.

3. Shared assumptions

Nuttall (1982, p. 7) develops the aspect of background knowledge and points out another important requirement that she calls „shared assumptions“. Shared assumptions are, according to her, one of the major factors influencing the comprehension ability in general. It means that the writer and the reader should share certain assumptions about the world and the way it works. (See the illustration below.)



Nuttall (1982, p. 7) Shared assumptions

For example, if the writer of a scientific article about species evolution expects his reader to have an understanding of biology, the text will not be readily understood by anyone who lacks this knowledge. Nuttall adds that the writer does not tell the reader what knowledge he or she assumes, so „problems in understanding arise when there is a mismatch between the presumptions of the writer and those of the reader“ (Nuttall, 1982, p. 7).

To sum up, pupils who have insufficiencies in their vocabulary and grammar knowledge but who also lack basic information about the social, cultural and historical aspects of a text will certainly have considerable difficulty understanding it. Therefore, the learners’

prior language knowledge and background knowledge are two major prerequisites of reading comprehension.

C. Reading comprehension

Lenz (2005)¹ defines reading comprehension as „the process of constructing meaning from a text. “ Reading comprehension involves at least two people: the reader and the writer. The process of comprehending involves decoding the writer’s words and using background knowledge to construct an approximate understanding of the writer’s message. It is an individual process of a reader who interprets an author’s message in a specific way.

However, this interpretation of a text can differ from the point of view of a different reader and therefore comprehension is a subjective outcome of a perception of an individual. According to Lenz (2005), it is affected by many conditions such as the reader’s knowledge of the topic, their knowledge of language structures, text structures and genres, the reader’s ability to use cognitive and metacognitive strategies, their reasoning abilities, motivation, and their level of engagement and many more. Although categorizing aspects that affect reading comprehension is not so definite, it can be generally stated that reading comprehension includes three major aspects: text, reader and reading strategies.

1. Reader

The first aspect of reading comprehension process is the reader. Each reader is a unique personality with his or her own qualities and dispositions to perceive and understand the text.

¹ LENZ, K., et al. Specialconnections.ku.edu [online]. University of Kansas : 2005 [cit. 2010-12-04]. *Special Connections*. Available from: <<http://www.specialconnections.ku.edu/cgbin/cgiwrap/specconn/index.php>>.

Firstly, readers differ in their reading predisposition. Since their knowledge of cultural and historical background varies, the reader brings different experiences and knowledge to a reading experience, so each reader constructs a different interpretation of a text. Readers also differ in their language skills. Language knowledge is directly connected to the ability of understanding the words and sentences of the text.

Secondly, there are other aspects of the reader which can significantly influence the reading comprehension process. These aspects concern physical capability of the reader. Physical condition of a reader, which means their physical health and good dispositions for effective reading. The major problem can be for example eye problems and visual disturbances. but also tiredness, exhaustion or illness that can affect reading. On the other hand, not only physical problems can influence effective reading. Dyslexia, Attention-Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or some other kinds of mental malfunction or disorder can have an impact on the reading comprehension ability.

2. Text

Text is the second aspect of the reading comprehension process. Texts of the right reading level should be neither too easy nor too hard for a particular reader. Choosing texts of the right difficulty and interest levels facilitate the reader's understanding and enjoyment of reading. „Vocabulary, word length, grammatical complexity and sentence length are traditionally used to indicate the difficulty level of a text“ (Pang, *et al.* 2003, p. 17). Language level of the text should be generally equal to the level of the reader language skills.

Moreover, according to Brown (1994, p. 91), it is useful to use especially authentic texts for developing reading comprehension. Authentic texts are more appropriate to practise or illustrate particular vocabulary or grammar. They provide students an opportunity to generalize grammar rules and vocabulary use. Moreover, authentic texts deepen the students' reading skills, as „the more various the texts are, the more language experience students can gain from reading. “

Finally, „the writer’s personal perception, feelings, and attitudes that therefore include the intended effect of the utterance on the reader“ (Nuttall, 2005, p. 21) is another aspect of a text that is often difficult for the reader to disclose. Thus, if students want to understand a text properly they should both understand grammatical and lexical concepts and get beyond the sentences to grasp the message from the text.

3. Reading comprehension strategies

Paris, Wasik, & Turner, (1991, p. 609) claim that „effective or expert readers are those readers who are strategic.“ This means that they have purposes for their reading and adjust their reading to each purpose and for each reading task. Generally, reading strategies are plans or methods that can be used to facilitate reading proficiency. Strategic readers should be able to use a variety of strategies and skills as they construct the meaning.

„A strategy is a plan selected deliberately by the reader to accomplish a particular goal or to complete a given task“ (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991, p. 610). When students are able to select and use a particular suitable strategy, they have achieved reading independence, which is the goal to which every learner should aspire. However, the readers do not usually acquire these skills naturally as they read. This means that reading strategies should be introduced and taught as a part of developing reading skills systematically, even in a foreign language class.

„The goal of all reading instruction is to help students become expert readers so that they can achieve independence and can use literacy for lifelong learning and enjoyment“ (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991, p. 609). Learning to use strategies effectively is also essential to constructing meaning. „Readers who are not strategic often encounter difficulties in their reading“ (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991, p. 609). These difficulties in reading should influence the future attitude towards reading as they can cause negative motivation leading to resignation.

D. Questioning as an educational tool

Questioning in general context is a part of human communication. It is a process of dealing with our knowledge, feelings and relationships. The reasons for asking questions can be classified as cognitive reasons, affective or social. „When we ask questions we „seek information or the solution to problems, we want to satisfy our curiosity or allay anxiety, and we want to make contact with or deepen our understanding of another person“ (Brown, Wragg, 1993, p. 3).

Questioning at school, in contrast with everyday conversations, differs significantly. The purpose of asking questions is mostly to find out what children already know. In contrast, „the reason for asking questions during a reading activity is to stimulate recall, to deepen understanding, to develop imagination and to encourage problem solving“ (Brown, Wragg, 1993, p. 3). Broadly speaking, we ask questions to support the pupil's learning process. Turney, *et al.* (1973) in Brown, Wragg, (1993, p. 4) defines questioning as a multiple educational tool. He considers questioning as a wide range instrument that teachers use to conduct teaching. Some reasons for asking questions are introduced in his list. For example:

- To arouse interest and curiosity concerning a topic.
- To focus attention on a particular issue or concept.
- To develop an active approach to learning.
- To express a genuine interest in the ideas and feelings of the pupil.

(Source: Turney *et al.*, 1973 in Brown, Wragg, 1993, p. 4)

E. Questioning as a reading strategy

Strategic readers ask themselves questions to clarify meanings of confusing texts and to predict what happens next in a text. „Asking questions is a metacognitive skill in which the proficient reader asks himself or herself questions to self-monitor comprehension“

(Curriculum Associates, Inc. 2005, p. 6). To be able to ask appropriate questions which can be beneficial for the reader it is necessary to know what questions, how, when and why to ask first. Otherwise, this is the teacher's task to help pupils become more proficient readers by modelling asking questions for them and encouraging them to use them when they read independently. The teacher can influence learner's comprehension by using appropriate questions. The main function of these questions is to navigate the learner to the particular outcome the teacher is expecting. Moreover, the reader is learning indirectly how to handle the text in general.

Questioning as a reading strategy is mostly used in the final part of a reading process – in after-reading stage, but questions can also occur in the before-reading stage, for example as a way of eliciting the prior knowledge or in the during-reading stage, for example to monitor the learner's understanding of the text. The function of questioning in each stage of reading process is to help the reader to understand the text better. These kinds of questions are called „reading comprehension questions“.

F. Reading comprehension questions

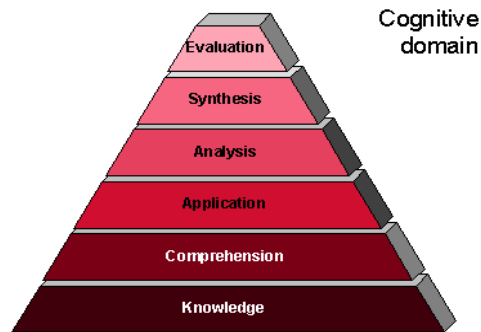
The most influential system of categorizing questions was developed and presented by American educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom.

1. Bloom's categorization of questions

In 1956 Benjamin Bloom with a group of other educational psychologists identified the levels of intellectual behaviour important in learning process. His categorization is known as Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. Bloom developed six categories. Each category precedes the following one hierarchically and ranges from the elementary ability to recall information gained from the text to the more complex and more intellectual skills. According to Bloom's taxonomy as a model for using questions, we can obtain a hierarchically arranged system which adheres to the different levels of thinking process at different stages of learning. Bloom's six-stage taxonomy

involves Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation (see the illustration).

Bloom's taxonomy 1²



The following description is based on Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (1956).

a. Knowledge

Requires recalling and reconditioning information the reader gained from the text. The mental action which is involved in this level is remembering. Although remembering is the lowest level of thinking skills, it is a crucial basis for approaching the higher one. The questions that are usually applied to this level contain verbs like: *Define, recall, memorize, name, duplicate, label, review, list, order, recognize, repeat, reproduce* or *state* are typical for Knowledge stage.

b. Comprehension

Comprehension stage requires not only remembering, but also understanding the matter. It means to grasp the meaning of the text, arrange and organize gained information intellectually. The reader should have a clear idea what the text is about and should be able for example *to translate, explain, classify, compare, contrast, describe, discuss,*

² Illustration resource: <http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/bloomtax.htm>

express, restate in other words (paraphrase), review or select some aspects from the text.

c. Application

Application as the third degree of the taxonomy requires an ability to apply the information the reader gained from the text. It means to be able to use what the reader learned to show understanding of the principles or rules. This stage requires also higher level thinking skills, because it deals with the higher mental abilities as imagination, making connections and certain level of creativity. Typical actions are for example, *to apply, classify, solve, use, show, diagram, demonstrate, record, translate, illustrate, choose, dramatize, employ, operate, practice, schedule, sketch* or *write*.

d. Analysis

Analysis requires an ability to analyse single elements, relationships and organizational principles. Analysing means to break the information the reader gained from the text into parts and identify reasons, uncover evidence and make conclusions. The reader should be able for example to *identify motives and causes, draw conclusions, determine evidence, support, analyze, deduce, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, justify, distinguish, examine* or *experiment*.

e. Synthesis

Synthesis is a more demanding thinking operation than analysis. In contrast to analysis, synthesis requires an ability to compile information together from elementary pieces and create a new, different, alternative outcome, mostly dealing with abstract relationships, which make it difficult. It requires creative thinking, imagination and invention. The reader is supposed to be able for example to *write* composition, essay or story, *make predictions, solve problems, arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan*, etc.

f. Evaluation

The last stage of the Bloom's taxonomy deals with an ability to make conclusions, judgements, to evaluate, validate and express the opinion or attitude. Evaluation is a kind of subjective thinking activity. The reader is supposed not only to present an idea, but also defend it, support it or bring new suggestions or solution to the issue. The reader, for example, should be able to *judge, value, evaluate, appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose, compare, defend, estimate, rate or select*.

To sum up, Bloom's taxonomy gives a clear schema of questioning that can help teachers to develop their learners' reading skills. Despite the fact the Bloom's taxonomy was developed more than half a century ago it is still an influential and inspiring method of education.

2. Nuttall's categorizing of questions

Another classification of questions beside the Bloom's taxonomy was developed for example by Nuttall (1982), who divided reading questions into five categories. Her division is a useful checklist for teachers who want to use good, prompting questions leading to comprehension. These categories are: questions of literal comprehension, questions involving reorganization and reinterpretation, questions of inference, questions of evaluation and questions of personal response (Nuttall, 1982, p. 132-133). Nuttall categorizes these questions to propose a full guide to the teachers to make sure if any important kind of question was not omitted and thus practice in a particular reading skill was not neglected.

a. Questions of literal comprehension

Questions of literal comprehension are those questions which are easily to answer because they can be found in a text directly; moreover they can be answered by the exact words found in a text. Questions of literal comprehension do not need deeper thinking approach. Learners do not have to use their own words to answer these questions as the words are given in a text. For example, questions of literal

comprehension might ask: „*When did Rahman's wife have an accident?*“ „*What was Yusof doing when it happened?*“ „*Why did not Yusof help his mother?*“ (Nuttall, 1982, p. 132)

b. Questions involving reorganization or reinterpretation

These kinds of questions are more difficult to answer than questions of literal comprehension. Learners obtain literal information from various parts of the text and put it together, or reinterpret the information (Nuttall, 1982). The advantage is that learners have to consider the text as a whole and do not focus only on separate sentences. Learners are supposed to reorganize the gained information. For example by the question: „*How many children had Rahma?*“ „*How old was Yusof?*“ „*Was Yusof playing in the kitchen?*“ (Nuttall, 1982, p. 132)

c. Questions of inference

„These are questions that oblige the learner to read *between lines* to consider what is implied but not explicitly stated“ (Nuttall, 1982, p. 132). Questions of inference are mostly the most difficult to answer for learners. Learners have to understand the text really well and they should be also able to work more intellectually than linguistically. Learners have to put the pieces of information found in the whole text in their mind together and make a new summary. Questions of inference might be for example: „*Which people were in Rahman's house when the accident happened?*“ „*Why was Rahman proud of his son?*“ (Nuttall, 1982, p. 132)

d. Questions of evaluation

„Evaluative questions involve the reader in making a considered judgement about the text in terms of what the writer is trying to do, and how far has he achieved it“ (Nuttall, 1982, p. 133). The reader might be asked to judge various aspects of the text or aspects of the writer. For example, the force of writer's argument, honesty, reliability, narrative story power, believability, humour, etc. Nuttall also emphasizes that questions of this type are the most sophisticated of all, thus the reason is that the learner is not only

supposed to respond according to the text, but also to analyse his or her responses and discover the objective reasons for it. Learners are supposed to give an answer with a reasonable argumentation. Questions of this type are on advanced level and thus are not useful for young or elementary level learners of foreign language.

e. Questions of personal response

Of all the types of questions, the answer to this type depends most on the reader and least on the writer. The reader is not asked to assess the techniques by means of which the writer influences him, but simply to express his reaction to the content of the text. „This may range from *I am convinced* or *I am not interested* to *I am moved* or *I am horrified*“ (Nuttall, 1982, p. 133). Questions of personal response might be for example: „*What is your opinion of X's behaviour?*“, „*Would you like to live in Y?*“, „*How would you have felt if you had been Z?*“, „*Do you sympathize with writer's arguments?*“ (Nuttall, 1982, p. 133)

These five question groups should be used in reading comprehension practice with learners of different age and language proficiency level. The only exceptions are questions of evaluations that require an advanced competence in reading in a foreign language. Reading comprehension questions according to Nuttall are designed to consider not only what the writer has written, but also how the writer has written the text. Moreover, they support critical thinking of learners, especially questions of evaluation and personal response. Learners have to consider on their own the possible answers and also find suitable arguments for their responses.

3. Conceptual, Empirical and Value questions

Another interesting approach to dividing questions is presented in Brown and Wragg, (1993) who claim: „The content of questions may be categorized as predominantly conceptual, predominantly empirical and predominantly value related. Conceptual questions are concerned with ideas, definitions and reasoning. Empirical questions require answers based upon facts or upon experimental findings. Value questions are concerned with relative worth and merit, with moral and environmental issues“ (Brown,

Wragg, 1993, p. 11). Each category of questions according to Brown and Wragg has its own dimension of questioning which should be used in a foreign language classes. „Conceptual questions are connected to the conceptual topic.“ Brown, Wragg (1993, p. 11) demonstrate the example of counting beads how conceptual question is made and how young learners deal with the answering. In their example pupils were asked: „Are there more brown beads than blue beads?“ Most pupils answered the questions easily but if the question was: „Are there more wooden beads than blue beads?“ some pupils were not able to solve the question correctly and some of them said that it was a trivial question. The reason of this disproportion in answers is that the question required some kind of logical thinking and reasoning. Conceptual questions are specific for their need of logic to be able to solve a reasoning problem. On the other hand, „empirical questions have no demand of logical thinking. They involve observation, recall of facts and possible experimentation“ (Brown, Wragg, 1993, p. 11). Learners can easily show, prove or explain the facts based on their own observation. The direct experience is the essential factor. „Value questions are questions concerned with morals, social concerns such as poverty, health issues such as smoking, and environmental issues such as pollution“ (Brown, Wragg, 1993, p. 12). These types of questions can be used not only in foreign language classes, especially covering the cross-curriculum classwork at primary and secondary schools. Value questions are useful as reading comprehension questions because of their evaluating character requiring a proper understanding of the text. The reader can for example answer a question after a reading activity about the moral of the fable or suggest a solution of some social problem, for example to a rising poverty in African countries after reading a newspaper article about the issue.

In conclusion, classification of questions – no matter which system is preferred to be used in the lesson, is important for realizing of their different construction, usage and purpose. Therefore, it is also essential to know how to use the question in an English lesson considering the aim the teacher wish to achieve by asking questions.

II. Methodology

A. Teaching reading principles

In teaching reading it is important to take into account several aspects which influence the reading process. These aspects include the text, the reader, as well as the suitable task. Choosing an appropriate text suitable for particular readers is the basis of a successful reading activity. The text should meet certain criteria or principles that respect the target reader and his or her individual demands. The principles described below, underline a construction of a suitable and meaningful reading activity for English foreign language students. Not all of the available reading materials are useful for all the readers in foreign language classes and it is important to decide which are beneficial for the readers and which are purposeless. When choosing a suitable material for the reading task or activity for students, the teacher should consider several major principles that influence the quality of desired outcome. First of all it is necessary to consider the students' level when selecting material. Then, it is also important to choose a text that would satisfy the students' interests and needs. Finally, for selecting appropriate material for the English foreign learners their background knowledge should be considered.

1. Kind of text

Firstly, there is a frequently discussed issue - what kind of reading should students do. The teacher primarily faces a controversy whether to choose an authentic text or not. Alexander, Jetton, Kulikowitch (1995, p. 559–75) explicitly state that for all the readers, children or adults, native or non-native speakers, it is important to use in the first place authentic texts. They also add that authentic texts are written with readers in mind, they are natural in their form and meaning and not constructed to illustrate specific vocabulary or word forms as not-authentic texts are. Harmer (1998, p. 68) points out that „people tend to be just worried about more traditional language-teaching materials which tended to look artificial and to use over-simplified language which any native

speaker would find comical.“ Non- authentic texts can be beneficial for students who are low-level readers. Low-level readers will be probably not able to understand at all the native-speakers text, such as articles from Guardian or The times newspaper. „There will be far too many words they have never seen before, the grammar will be convoluted and the style will finish them off“ (Harmer, 1998, p. 68). Obviously, the teacher should be able to decide whether the authenticity of the text is beneficial or definitely ineffective for the particular readers considering especially their language level.

2. Language level

Language level of the English foreign language student determiners not only the choice between authentic or non-authentic text, but also the decision of the type of reading material in general. Texts of the right reading level should be neither too easy nor too hard for the reader. The appropriate level of the text indicates the vocabulary range and grammar difficulty or sentence length and structures used in a text. These elements are traditionally used to indicate the difficulty level of a text. Choosing texts of the right difficulty should be challenging enough so that the students would want to read and at the same time to enjoy what they are reading. „Reading is an incredibly active occupation. To do it successfully, we have to understand what the words mean, see the pictures the words are painting, understand the arguments... if we do not do these things then we only just scratch the surface of the text“ (Harmer, 1998, p. 70). Otherwise, reading without understanding fail its purpose, because the message of the text is not transferred to the reader and motivation to read or interest in the text fails completely. To sum up, the absence of comprehension can be caused directly by the inappropriate language level of the text. It is essential to consider the actual language level of learners and according to this choose the suitable text for a reading activity.

3. Content of text

As the ability to understand the text is the main aspect of motivation to read, there is also another factor influencing the motivation of the reader. This is content of the text or a subject matter of the text. The text should be interesting, attractive and catchy for the

reader to motivate him or her to continue with reading to gain more information about the subject. An interesting topic can encourage students to be more engaged with the text. Harmer (1998, p. 70) adds that “the focus on the meaning of the text is as much important as the language level consideration”. The text should be attractive for the reader and it should be also in accordance with their intellectual level as well. The teacher needs to consider the age of her or his learners, their mental development, their interests and hobbies. It is also effective to personalize the topic of the reading as much as possible to the readers. To evoke personal attitudes or feelings about the topic can help to make the learners become more engaged in the activity.

4. Cultural background factor

Alexander, Jetton, Kulikowitch (1995, p. 559–75) mention also cultural background as one of the major factors influencing reading process. According to them, knowledge of a cultural background is especially important when choosing texts for non-native speakers, because some texts may contain references to situations, objects and experiences that can be in the most cases unfamiliar to non-native speakers. They claim that the principle is that readers with substantial prior knowledge of a subject are more likely to use their knowledge to read more difficult texts. Whether or not the text is understandable to the readers should be considered in advance by the teacher and therefore sufficient explanation of the cultural background at first is required to avoid reader’s demotivation.

5. Matching the task to the topic

„Once a decision has been taken about what reading text the students are going to read, we need to choose good reading tasks – the right kind of questions“ (Harmer, 1998, p. 70). Harmer claims that choosing the right task for the reading activity is the last but not less important factor which can make the reading activity meaningful and interesting for the readers or totally demotivating, useless and boring. The most interesting and most considered text can be easily discredited by asking wrong, boring and not contextual questions or giving any kind of unreasonable task. This can be illustrated by the example of giving to the students text narrating a fable and for example instead of

reasonable questions about the morale of a fable the students read, the teacher gives them a list of questions from a linguistic area such as „Find any example of the present continuous tense or explain the use of the past perfect in the third line, etc.“ Such kinds of questions are definitely inappropriate to the particular text. If the text contains an important message that the students understand they would find it meaningless not to discuss it. The readers would find more interesting the questions about the content of the text – what the meaning and moral of the fable actually is. Moreover, linguistic questions can not develop imagination, critical thinking or personal opinions the fable suggests from its natural characteristic. On the other hand, suitable questions which are thoroughly created and used can even make a dull text attractive and interesting for the readers. The text and the task should match together logically and naturally. In addition, it is the teacher who should consider what aspect of foreign language is useful to teach through the reading activity. The teacher should set his or her aims and objectives first and according to them choose an appropriate text suitable for the lesson or activity.

Moreover, the reading question the teacher is asking should not only considerably and meaningfully match the particular topic, but it is also important to formulate the question or task correctly according to the answer we expect to obtain from the reader. In the theory part of this thesis various types of reading comprehension questions were introduced. The authors of these categorising systems as Bloom, Nuttall or Brown presented different views that were classified according to their purpose and role in a reading process. Being familiarized with the function, purpose and use of the questions in particular situations; we also need to realize how to construct the question that would correspond our aim.

B. Formulating comprehension questions

There are several elementary categories of question forms which can be used for different purposes. Doff (1988, p. 22) claim that different kinds of questions are

appropriate to different purposes according to their form. Basically, these categories can be classified as Yes/No questions, „Or“ questions, WH-questions, Multiple-choice questions and Open-ended/Closed-ended questions.

1. Yes/No questions

In linguistics, a Yes/No question, formally known as a polar question, is a question whose expected answer is either "yes" or "no". "Formally, they present an exclusive disjunction, a pair of alternatives of which only one is acceptable" (Grimes, 1975, p. 66). In the English language, such questions can be formed in both positive and negative forms (e.g. "Will you be here tomorrow?" and "Won't you be here tomorrow?" (Grimes, 1975, p. 66) Yes"/"No" questions are considered as the easiest ones for their explicit answer. For example a question such as "Was the main character of the story disappointed with the result of his work?" ("Yes"/"No") This is a common form of comprehension question, but it has the drawback of allowing the student a 50% chance of guessing the correct answer. So when using yes/no questions, it would be beneficial to follow up with other forms of questions to ensure that the reader has really understood the text. For example, "Did you like this article?" "Why?" "The follow-up questions may be more useful in helping students than the initial yes/no questions" (Day, 2005, p. 65). To sum up, using yes/no questions has its own drawbacks. They should not be ambiguous for the learner. Moreover, it is also important to consider the purpose of this kind of question. As Yes/No questions are ineffective to be asked, for example when requiring the deeper understanding of the text, they can be useful for example for a task that requires scanning.

2. „Or“ questions

„Or“ questions are also called „alternative questions“. "The reply is usually a word or phrase from the question itself. They are formed in exactly the same way as „Yes"/"No" questions, but contain two final elements" (Doff, 1988, p. 66). For example: *"Do you like tea or coffee?"*

"Do you study English or French?" "Was the main character of the story ten or eleven years old?" "Alternative questions have worked best for us with literal, reorganization,

inference, and prediction types of comprehension. We have found that they do not lend themselves as well to evaluation and personal response.” (Day, 2005, p. 66). Therefore, these questions are useful when we want our students to focus on the one correct answer.

3. “WH” questions

In journalism, the „Five W’s“ (Who, Where, What, When, Why, How) is a concept in news style, research, and in police investigations. It is a method of gathering the required information directly, minimizing the possibility of indirect unexpected answer. The purpose of asking questions to pupils that make use of interrogative words (WH-words) is simply to avoid too easy answer. Importantly, none of these questions can be answered with a simple „yes“ or „no“. Considering this, asking „WH“ questions is more demanding to the learner. They require concrete answer developed and structured in the learner’s mind. Day (2005, p. 66) points out that “in particular, “WH” questions with how/why are often used to help students to go beyond a literal understanding of the text. As beginning and intermediate readers are often reluctant to do this, using how/why questions can be very helpful in aiding students to become interactive readers.

4. Multiple - choice questions

“Multiple-choice questions are based on other forms of questions. They can be, for example, a Wh-question with a choice” (Day, 2005, p. 66). For example:

- “*Where was Icarus born?*”
 - a. *Greece*
 - b. *Italy*
 - c. *Crete*
 - d. *Icaria island*

Generally, this form of question has mostly one correct answer when dealing with literal comprehension. The multiple-choice format can make Wh-questions easier to answer than WH-questions without options because they give the readers some possible answers they can choose from. Students have the opportunity to check the text to see if

any of the choices are mentioned or discussed, and then make a choice. “Multiple-choice questions may be used most effectively, in our experience, with literal comprehension. They can also be used with prediction and evaluation” (Day, 2005, p. 67). However, Day (2005, p. 67) suggests also using other follow-up activities when choosing these forms of multiple choice questions that allow learners to explain their choices to avoid simple guessing.

5. Closed-ended and Open-ended questions

Closed-ended and open-ended questions are two basic categories of questions used in foreign language classes. They provide an opportunity for the teacher to decide what kind of response from the learner is required. Closed-ended questions are generally used when the teacher wants to elicit some straight, mostly one possible correct answer with no time prominence. On the other hand, open-ended questions have a different purpose. Their function is to support critical thinking, imagination and thus create an intellectual involvement.

“Closed-ended questions can include presuming, probing, or leading questions. By definition, these questions are restrictive and can be answered in a few words” (Jennerich, 1987, p. 14). For example, a closed-ended question might ask:

- *Are you looking for something?*
- *Do you like this picture?*
- *Would you tell me more about it?*

As closed-ended questions are short and clear, they are easily analysed and assessed. Moreover, “closed-ended question can increase motivation in a class by stimulating fast interaction between learners and the teacher. Closed-ended questions take less time to answer although they are much more difficult to design” (Brookover *et al.* 2003, p. 65). It is necessary to realize the possible answer to the question and consider if it corresponds to the answer required. Otherwise, closed-ended questions product mostly incomplete responses, so they can result in misleading assumptions and conclusions. In contrast, open-ended questions are those questions that solicit additional information

from the inquirer. By definition, “they are broad and require more than one or two word responses” (Jennerich, 1987, p. 14). For example, open-ended question might ask:

- *How was your holiday?*
- *Tell me what the song is about?*
- *What are you looking for?*

Open- ended questions are used to generate longer, non-superficial answers. They are used for example, in discussion activities. The aim is to get an unrestrained and free response. Open-ended questions allow respondents to include more information, which is the main advantage. Feelings, attitudes and especially understanding can be better proved and consequently accessed. Open-ended questions do not allow learners to ignore reading the questions and just "fill in" them for example, with all the same answers or fill the questions randomly. On the other hand, open-ended questions can be time-consuming because they often contain additional information so the answers are long and not so easily assessed. They are also more demanding to the learners who need more time to answer.

C. Teaching reading

Asking questions as a reading strategy can help to the readers to understand the text better. Therefore, it is important to include an appropriate questioning into the complex framework of teaching reading in foreign language classes. The traditional and effective way of helping students develop a set of reading strategies and match appropriate strategies to each reading situation is to use the **three-stage model** that consists of before-reading, during reading and after-reading stage. It is also beneficial to use the **Bloom’s taxonomy** which is generally considered as one of the most influential and representative taxonomy in educational systems when formulating the appropriate questions. Questions according to the Bloom’s taxonomy can be applied on each stage

of the three-stage model. Both strategies are inspired by the natural learning processes relying on the procedural, “step by step” process of human thinking and learning.

As it was already described in the Theory chapter, Bloom classifies six cognitive levels the learners should master. The levels of complexity are described as a stairway system where the main role has a teacher. The teacher should encourage the learners to “climb up” from the lowest level of cognitive stage to the higher one to reach the most complex level of thinking at the end of the process. Bloom’s taxonomy is based on questioning system connected individually to each cognitive level. Providing complete directions, this questioning system can be a useful tool for teachers in organizing lessons. The aim of the table below is to suggest what types of questions are suitable to be asked by the teacher in a different level. There are also “action verbs” indicating the specific mental process of the learner, which should be activated in the particular level of the taxonomy.

Table of Bloom’s taxonomy³:

Cognitive level	Examples of suitable questions	Action verbs
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who...? • What...? • When...? • Where...? • How....? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a list of..., Make a timeline of..., Make a chart showing..., Identify, Examine, Show, Name, Memorize, Collect, Order, Recognize, Relate, Recall, Repeat, Reproduce, State
Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe...? • Can you retell...? • Can you explain...? • How do you think...? • Why do you think...? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize, Describe, Interpret, Contrast, Predict, Differentiate, Distinguish, Associate, Extend, Classify, Describe, Explain, Select, Identify, Review, Translate, Discuss, Express, Estimate

³ Resources:

http://www.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm

<http://coun.uvic.ca/learning/exams/blooms-taxonomy.html>

Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you group by characteristic...? • What factors would you change if...? • Can you apply ... to your own experience? • How is... related to...? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply, Demonstrate, Calculate, Show, Illustrate, Complete, Relate, Examine, Show, Solve, Change, Classify, Dramatize, Choose, Discover, Operate, Interpret, Solve, Use, Practice, Write
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you see as other possible outcome? • Can you compare your own... with the...? • How is... similar to...? • Can you distinguish between...? • What was the motive...? • What was the reason of...? • How does... compare/contrast to...? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain, Analyse, Compare, Contrast, Arrange, Divide, Infer, Select, Categorize, Calculate, Differentiate, Criticize, Experiment, Examine, Distinguish
Synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you see a possible solution to...? / What would you suggest to...? • How many ways can you...? • What would happen if...? • What would you predict from...? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine, Suggest, Modify, Rearrange, Plan, Invent, Design, Prepare, Generalize, Create, Compose, Arrange, Rewrite, Propose, Set up, Manage, Write
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you agree or not? Can you defend your position about...? • What do you think about...? / Do you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide, Assess, Recommend, Measure, Select, Judge, Convince, Explain, Support, Conclude, Compare, Summarize, Argue, Attach, Choose, Defend, Predict, Value, Rate,

	<p>think... it is a bad or good thing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you believe...? • Are you similar kind of person? • How would you feel if...? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimate, Evaluate
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1. Three-stage model of reading process

If a teacher want his/her students to be really fully involved in reading, it is commonly used a three-stage model of teaching, which includes: strategies before, during (while) and after reading. Teaching reading strategies in the three-part reading model requires choosing suitable activities in different parts of reading process. Questioning as an effective reading comprehension strategy should be naturally employed within all three stages.

a. Before-reading stage

Strategies used before-reading deal with what is already known or experienced by the reader – the prior knowledge. Students connect their background knowledge to the new knowledge and meanings gained from the reading (story, article, chapter, poem, play, myth...) “Explicit attempts to get students to engage in prediction behaviours. „Prior knowledge activation, previewing, and overiewing have proved successful in increasing interest in and memory for stories“ (Duke & Pearson, 2002, p. 213).

„The before-reading activities relate to the topic and thinking about these activities brings to life students background knowledge and skills about a specific topic and genre. “The aim is to make it easier for learners to understand the text and help them focus attention on it as they read” (Doff, 1988, p. 59). The basic prerequisite in this stage is vocabulary knowledge, but as an important part of reading is ability to guess the meaning of unknown words from the context, it is not necessary to provide to the

learners all the vocabulary review before reading. The reader should be able to have a general understanding the text even if he/she does not know every single word. On the other hand, there could be words which can make a text very difficult to understand and at the same time are important for the general understanding of the context. These words can be for example scientific or expert terms. Generally, to support students' comprehension it is advisable to present vocabulary which is essential for understanding before reading activity. When supporting vocabulary knowledge, the teacher should continue to develop another before-reading skill – prediction.

(1) Prediction

Doff (1988, p. 41) claims that “we do not usually begin reading with a completely empty mind – we have some idea of what we are going to read about.” This idea should be formed in a reader's mind as a certain form of guessing – prediction of things which are expected to be found in the text. Similarly, Harmer (1998, p. 70) also emphasizes that it is beneficial to make students engaged in their reading, which means to give them a „hint“ of what is in the text. The hint can be almost everything that makes the text message understandable. For instance, pictures or photographs used to illustrate the content of the text or clear headline hint at what the article is probably going to be about. „The moment we get this hint, our brain starts predicting what we are going to read and our expectations are set up and so the active process of reading is ready to begin“ (Harmer, 1998, p. 70). These hints can help to make the text more readable, clear, visually attractive and so more interesting to the reader. Prediction is the major prerequisite making reading activity effective. Providing the opportunity to understand the text better, the learner can be more successful reader. The aim of prediction skill is to help to the learners to develop a certain gist of the text they are going to read. Together with the necessary vocabulary acknowledgement, the reader can predict the information the text will probably contain. Asking questions is a useful tool how to help to the readers to gain this certain gist of the text. The teacher can for example ask questions supporting the reader's prediction with the help of the picture connected to the topic. The readers can guess from the picture the content of the text. These questions can be for example constructed as multiple-choice questions providing a list of possible

answers or they can be asked in order to make a thought map on a board leading to a discussion about the most probable answer.

Moreover, for this stage of reading process the teacher can use the questions of **knowledge** of the Bloom's taxonomy. The cognitive level of knowledge requires that students recognize, identify or recall the useful information. Predicting and remembering are the key intellectual activity. The teacher can ask his or her learners for example:

- *"Can you guess what the story is going to be about?"*
- *"Look at the picture and try to imagine..."*
- *"What do you think is going to happen..."*

b. During-reading stage

Once students have developed a background foundation for the reading content, they progress into active reading strategies. During-reading strategies focus primarily on understanding, realizing and recalling what the reader has already read in the text. Asking questions is a useful tool to support it. The teacher can use various types of questions depending on their purpose.

Flood, Lapp and Fischer, (2003, p. 937) describe a questioning strategy which can be helpful for the readers' comprehension of the text. This question-answer strategy involves according to them two basic types of questions. The first type involves text-based questions, in which the answers are explicitly stated in the text or require a certain inductive thinking skills. For example: *"Where is the main character of the story from?" "Why is he sad?" "Why is the little boy his only friend?"* The second type involves knowledge-based questions, in which the reader has to read the text to understand the question (the answer is not in the text) or it is even possible for the reader to answer the question without reading the text at all. For example: *"Can you guess..., What is the most probable..., What do you think..., Do you have any idea..."* These types of questions mostly require readers' opinions, feelings and ideas about the future content of a text.

According to Lapp, Flood, and Fisher (2003, p. 937), „strategic readers should monitor their comprehension by using three basic during-reading strategies. Inferring, predicting outcomes and visualizing the text. All these strategies can be developed by asking appropriate types of questions.

(1) Inferring

Inferring is a reader's ability to find information that is not directly stated in the text. According to Harvey and Goudvis (2000, p. 22), “inferential thinking occurs when text clues merge with the reader's prior knowledge and point toward a conclusion about an underlying theme or idea in a text.” The teacher can ask questions of inferring to support the readers' skill to recognise and accept clues the text provides and then draw conclusions based on them.

Considering the Bloom's taxonomy, we can ask our learners questions of **comprehension**. This cognitive level requires that students are able to organize and arrange the text and demonstrate a personal grasp. These types of questions are closed-ended requiring a specific answer based on the information gained from the text. For example:

- “*Why do you think Peter ignored father's advice?*”
- “*What do you think was the main reason Peter did it?*”
- “*Can you describe Peter's feelings about the problem?*”
- “*Can you explain why Peter's father was angry?*”

(2) Predicting outcomes

Ability to predict an outcome means to be able to guess about the events that will occur later in the text. Predictions the readers do can be either confirmed or contradicted by the end of the text. “The aim of predicting outcomes is to encourage students to use their existing knowledge to facilitate their understanding of new ideas encountered in the text” (Duke and Pearson, 2002, p. 212). Learners should reread the selected parts of the text to see if their predictions are supported.

Applying the Bloom's taxonomy, the teacher can ask the reader questions of **application**. Questions of applications require that the readers are able to apply information gained from the text, understand the principles and use what was learned previously. The reader is supposed to predict, interpret, use, relate or calculate. Questions of application are open-ended questions in contrast with the questions of comprehension. They can not be answered with one or two words. They can be asked for example:

- *“What do you think Peter will do after leaving his parents?”*
- *“Where do you think he will move?”*
- *“What passage from the text supports your prediction?”*
- *“What would you change if you were Peter?”*

(3) Visualizing the text

Ability to use information from a text to create pictures about the text's characters, events or another kind of information is called visualizing. Visualizing is defined by Harvey and Goudvis (2000, p. 22) as “one of the comprehension strategies that enables readers to make the words on a page real and concrete”. These authors also emphasize the major benefits this strategy can provide. Besides enhancing meaning with mental imagery, which enables to the reader to strengthen the relationship with the text, it also can help to make the reader more engaged with a text. This can naturally affect the readers' attitude and motivation towards reading. Generally, having a clear picture, for example of the main character of the story we are reading, makes the story more interesting, attractive and memorable and therefore more understandable. “When children in the middle and later elementary grades are taught to construct images representing the ideas related by text, their memory and comprehension of text improves” (Pressley, 2002, p. 299). As visualizing means to be able to create mental imagery, learners can for example complete various diagrams, charts, illustrations of particular scenes from the text to construct relationships between vocabulary and concepts. The main tool is to stimulate visualizing by asking questions.

The teacher can also ask questions of **application** according to the Bloom's taxonomy. When visualizing, the reader should be able to apply previously learned information and consequently create an imaginary picture in his or her mind. In this case, the reader is supposed to illustrate, show or dramatize. These kinds of questions are open-ended. As their function is to support reader's imagination they require more than one or two word response. They can be asked for example:

- *"How Peter looks?"*
- *"How Peter acts?"*
- *"How Peter's home looks?"*

c. After-reading stage

After-reading strategies or post-reading strategies are used at the end of the reading process. Their prior function is to think about the information gained from the text. This thinking activity may contain actions as summarizing, evaluation or synthesizing. Generally, „post-reading questioning strategies are comprehension tools that can strengthen and extend students' understanding of text“ (Curriculum Associates, Inc. 2005, p. 9). These strategies can be summarized into three basic groups: making connections, returning to text and summarizing.

(1) Making connections

The purpose of making connections is to develop student's ability to realize the relevance of the text to the real world throughout making connections with the prior knowledge. Keen and Zimmermann (1997, p. 152) claim: "As readers link stories to their own lives, other books, and the larger world, they use what they know to construct new and meaningful understandings."

The ability of constructing the connection between the new information gained from the text and the real world requires the higher level of thinking skills. The reader is supposed to identify motives and causes, determine evidence, support, deduce, compare and contrast, criticize, differentiate, justify or distinguish. According to the Bloom's

taxonomy, the teacher can support this ability by asking questions of **analysis**. These kinds of questions are open-ended as they require more complex response. After-reading questions supporting making connections can be formed for example:

- *“What was the reason of Peter’s behaviour?”*
- *“How the story of Peter compare to the story of Romeo and Juliet?”*
- *“How would your parents react? Can you compare your own experience with the Peter’s?”*

(2) Returning to text

In order to find essential information in a text, the reader needs to return to the particular parts of the text where the required information is mentioned. This ability can be also practiced by use of questions of **analysis** according to the Bloom’s taxonomy. Returning to text require especially ability to analyse, determine evidence, explain, select or distinguish. A useful practice of reviewing the content of the text can be done for example by using multiple-choice questions as:

- *“What term best describe Peter?”*
 - a. *Angry*
 - b. *Disappointed*
 - c. *Courageous*
- *“What was the second place he decided to go after leaving his parents?”*
 - a. *A village near his hometown*
 - b. *A village of his aunt Josephine*
 - c. *Jenny’s flat in the centre of Jamestown.*

(3) Summarizing

When summarizing, the readers should be able to highlight the main points of a text, providing the main idea or the purpose of the text. Summarizing requires higher-level of thinking skills because the learner has to be skilled enough to grasp the text as a whole -

to synthesize and make own summarizing idea and opinion. Making summary is a final product of reading process making the text meaningful. For example, the reader should understand the moral of the fable after reading it and apply its meaning into the real life.

In this stage of reading process it is also suitable to use the questions of Bloom's taxonomy. In order that the main aim of summarizing is an ability to understand the text as a whole, the appropriate questions are questions of synthesis and questions of evaluation. Firstly, questions of **synthesis** require original and creative thinking of the reader. As many potential answers are possible, these kinds of questions are open-ended. The teacher can ask for example about the possible solution, suggestion, generalization or proposal the reader can suggest. Questions of synthesis may be asked for example:

- *“What is the moral of the fable?”*
- *“How would you apply it on young people nowadays?”*
- *“Do you have any similar experience as the main character of the story?”*
- *“What would happen, if ...?”*

Secondly, questions of **evaluation** require that the readers judge, or evaluate the merit of an idea of the text. They should be able to express their own opinion and position. These kinds of questions are also open-ended as they require more than one or two word response. These questions may be asked for example:

- *“What do you think about...?”*
- *“Do you agree with the position of the main character?”*
- *“How would you feel if you were his father?”*
- *“Can you see a possible solution ...?”*

In conclusion, the teacher should at first consider what particular reading skill is going to be practiced and what are the aims of the reading activity. According to this the teacher should choose an appropriate text. It is essential to consider its content and cultural background. There is also important to consider the language level of the students and choose the text which would fit to this level. After choosing the text,

setting aims and objectives of a particular reading activity have been done, then, it is necessary to choose a suitable task or questions for each stage of reading process no matter which model or combination of reading strategies the teacher prefers to use. Generally, it can be concluded that the manner the question is asked by the teacher is equal to the manner the learner thinks about the text and consequently understands. The theoretical and methodological conclusions presented in this thesis underlie the importance of introducing and practising reading skills in English foreign language classes to promote the learners' critical reading competence. One way to achieve this is asking suitably formulated questions that can be used in all stages of the reading process and at a different cognitive level.

Based on these findings, the following hypothesis can be stated: **Using appropriately chosen, formulated and sequenced questions that fit particular learning situations can involve the learners into the reading process effectively and help them better understand a text.** If learners are exposed to regular training in this kind of support they can become more proficient readers.

III. Project design

A. Criteria for reading activity design

1. Choosing a text

When choosing a suitable material for the reading activity I had to consider several aspects: the interest of the learners, their background knowledge of the topic, the actual content of the text and also the language level of the particular class.

Firstly, I decided to choose not only an attractive topic which would be interesting for the learners but also a topic which would be educationally beneficial for them. I made a decision on two main aspects: as I was informed that English class students were talking about Greek and Rome myths in the history class and my English lesson goal for the following week was to practice the past form of verbs, the most appropriate topic was discovered. I decided to choose three texts with the topic of Greek myth. The learners could practice the past form of verbs and I could also assume that the learners had certain background knowledge of the topic at the same time. Moreover, the topic is attractive enough to motivate the learners to read the texts with an interest.

Secondly, I considered the content of the text. It was necessary to choose the text suitable to the age of the learners. As they were thirteen or fourteen years old, it was important to find an interesting topic which can encourage them to be engaged with the text. Therefore, I chose three stories from the Greek myths which I considered as the most attractive:

- *The story of Odysseus*
- *Icarus*
- *The legend of Atlantis*

The story of Odysseus and Icarus are stories based on adventure of a hero which is mostly the favourite topic for young people considering the heroic films, serials and also computer games preferred by teenagers nowadays. The legend of Atlantis is a very likeable topic especially due to the popular sci-fi serial where the Atlantis is explained as a giant spaceship. As I noticed many teenagers like to watch it regularly in recent time, so I assumed that the story would be also interesting for them as they have a certain background knowledge of the topic.

Thirdly, I also had to consider the language level of the texts. The potential readers were from the eighth grade of elementary school. Their language skills should be on the pre-intermediate level. It was also an obligatory precondition for me to choose the text in which the use of the past forms of verbs was demonstrated. As the stories are narrated naturally in the past tense, there was no difficulty to accomplish this precondition. The

chosen texts fit to the pre-intermediate level so the learners should have no difficulty with the grammar or the most of the vocabulary used in the texts - the readers should be able to have a general understanding even he or she does not know every single word. The sources of the chosen texts are following:

- *The story of Odysseus*: the source is the pre-intermediate student's book: Oxenden, C., Seligson, P. *English File 2*. 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. 144 p. ISBN: 0-19-435522-5
- *Icarus*: "Icarus." *Encyclopedia Mythica from Encyclopedia Mythica* Online.<<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/i/icarus.html>>[Accessed October 1, 2010].
- *The legend of Atlantis*: Self-created material based on the Plato's myth described in the Socratic dialogue *Timaeus*.

2. Lesson fit

Each reading activity is designed to fit into the standard lesson plan of the class. As it was stated before, the aim of the following lessons was to practice the past forms of the verbs. Therefore, I used the reading texts also as a material for the purpose of revision. This review was a part of the reading activity in the during-reading stage. The advantage was that the learners did the required grammar practice and in the same time they did the reading activity I had prepared for them. All the three reading materials I had prepared enabled me to combine these two aspects of the lessons, provided not to disturb the original lesson plans.

3. Asking questions

In the reading activities I prepared and used various kinds of questions which could lead to better comprehension. Questions relating to the text were used in before-reading stage, during reading stage and also in after-reading stage. For each reading stage I chose appropriate questions based on the theoretical and methodological principles described in previous parts of this thesis. As each stage of the reading process should develop different reading skills, the questions are chosen to support the most beneficial

strategy for each stage of the reading process. The aim was to verify the hypothesis that questions which are appropriately chosen, formulated and sequenced can help students to become more involved into the reading process and consequently can help them to understand a text better.

B. Criteria for evaluation of the project

1. Reflections

For evaluation of the project I elaborated reflections for each reading activity realized in the English classes. The aim of reflections was to gain valuable information about the project quality and verify the hypothesis Evaluation of the project required a careful observation of the learners in the class during the whole reading activity and consequent analysis of findings.

Firstly, I made my own notes during each activity and recorded all the useful information about the reading procedure including also the learner's attitude, interest and engagement. Some of the notes I managed to make during the lesson, for example the answers of the learners to my questions. Otherwise, some of the notes were I made directly after the lesson. For example, the signs of the learners' attitude, engagement and also my personal point of view to the reading activity process. The main aim was to focus on the parts where questions were used of the reading activity. The purpose was to verify the actual beneficial effects of the usage of before, during and after-reading questions. Secondly, to collect the most reliable data about the project I also gained another useful feedback from the learners themselves. I designed a short questionnaire for them to evaluate the project from their point of view.

2. Questionnaires for the learners

Questionnaires were designed as a useful tool to gain the reflection from the learners. As it was not possible to ask each individual about the project due to the lack of time, the questionnaire was a suitable solution to gain a certain feedback from all the learners in the class in a quite short time. The questionnaire was given to the learners at the end of the lesson and it did not take more than a few minutes to fill them. The questions were asked in the Czech language and the learners made the answer from the provided options: “yes”, “rather yes”, “rather no” and “definitely no”.

The questionnaires consisted of questions evaluating the three reading activities mainly with respect to questioning in all the three stages of the reading activity. I focused on the reading parts where the questions were used. The aim was to gain the learners’ reflection about the efficiency and beneficial effect of the questioning strategies used before, during and after reading activity.

Learners’ reflections are based on the questionnaire containing five questions. The first and the second questions aimed to find out if the questioning preceding the reading supported the learners’ interest into the topic of the text and helped them to gain a gist about the content. The third question asked if the questioning used during the reading helped to the learners to realize better the plot and remember the characters of the story. The fourth question concerned the potential difficulty of the after-reading question task which required summarizing skill. The final question tested if the learners considered questioning in all three stages of the reading useful for their better understanding or not. The questionnaires with the learners’ answers are provided in the appendices, chapter 1. *Collected data from the questionnaires.*

C. Project description

In order to describe the project it is also suitable to provide the background information about the school and the classes where the project was realized. This enables to present the actual surroundings and conditions under which the project was designed and also introduce in more detail the learners participating on the project.

1. School description

The project was designed to be tested in the 8th grade of the elementary school of Kynšperk nad Ohří during the teaching practice (September/October 2010).

The school has a long-standing educational tradition from the end of the 19th century till nowadays in the area. The school is situated in the centre of town and it consists of four buildings: the old building and three new pavilions A, B and C. The old building is dedicated to the 1 – 5 grade students, pavilions A and B are dedicated to 5 – 9 grade students. In the pavilion C we can found gyms and free-time activity rooms. There is also a small building of school canteen and after school club. The school consist of 20 classes with 448 children. Two of them are dedicated to the children with special educational needs. The school is deeper focused on the special education. There are mostly two parallel classes in each grade. (Class A and class B.) The school is providing the education according to the new educational school programme: *“Poznáváme sebe a svět”*.

The school provides to its students a wide range of foreign language education. Beside the obligatory foreign language classes it provides the opportunity to attend an optional language classes for students of 7 – 9 grades and also after school language classes for children of all grades. The students start to attend the obligatory classes of foreign language in the 3rd grade. At this time they have to decide if they will study English or German as a foreign language. After choosing the language, they are divided into English and German groups. Each language group is then divided into two small classes So that the teachers have manageable number of students in one class. The foreign

language classes are led 3 – 4 times a week according to the grade. In the 7th grade the students can choose a second foreign language from the range of optional subjects.



4

2. Class description

The hypothesis was tested in the 8th grade classes. As the most of the grades at the school, the 8th grade also contains of two parallel classes - 8. A and 8. B. From the whole number of 43 students of the 8th grade more than a half of them are attending English language classes (24) and less than a half (19) are attending German language classes. Those children who are attending English language classes are divided into two parallel groups: group 1 and group 2. Both classes are equivalent of the number of students. Unfortunately, during the teaching practice some of these children were missing due to the representation of the school at a cultural event abroad or were ill so the classes were quite low-attended at the beginning of my teaching practice. Considering insufficient number of students in the classes at that time, the project was realized in the second half of the teaching practice when the students came back to the school.

The students of these classes are thirteen or fourteen years old with one exception of a boy from the group 2, who is retaking the 8th grade this year. According to my tutor, this grade is generally considered as problematic. Children of this grade are having especially behavioural and disciplinary problems. Some of them came from socially disadvantaged and deprived family backgrounds; therefore their socializing process and

⁴ Photo source: <http://www.kynšperk.cz/mestske-organizace/zakladni-skola/aktualni-info/historie-skoly/>

education is demanding on teachers. On the other hand, English classes consist of students from both A and B classes; therefore they are not in the common surroundings of their class and the result is that they are accepting a different social role in the new, mixed class. They are well-adapted to the discipline requirements of their English teacher. As there is the advantage of two joined classes, there is also a disadvantage. These children mostly do not know each other well and so they are afraid to communicate and cooperate in the class together. I was also said that, for example, an effective group work is hard to achieve there.

In conclusion, it is obvious that these two groups of the 8th grade children need well-organized lessons with clear and reasonable rules which need to be accepted to maintain the discipline in the class. It is also important to motivate them to the positive attitude towards learning the language. For example, their individual interests or opinions should be supported in the class as much as possible. If this is achieved these children will direct their energy and determination into the learning process and cooperation with each other. When testing the hypothesis I discovered a great potential of these students to be enthusiastic, active, curious, devoted to the issue and therefore to be also good learners.

3. Lesson plans

a. Reading activity 1: The story of Odysseus

Class: 8.A/B, group 2

Aims: To practice past forms of verbs, to develop selected reading skills, to test the hypothesis that using appropriately chose, formulated and sequenced questions that fit particular situations can involve the learners into the reading process effectively and help them better understand a text.

Learning objectives: The learners should be able to recognise regular and irregular verbs and recognize the correct past form of the verbs from the provided options. Moreover, they should learn using particular before-reading, during-reading and after-reading strategies.

Materials: Flash-cards, reading materials (one copy for each learner).

Thesis focus: Before-reading questions (Prior knowledge activation questions, questions of prediction), during-reading questions (monitoring comprehension during reading: predicting outcomes, inferring, visualizing) and after-reading questions (questions developing making connection, returning to text and summarizing question).

Time: 45 min

⇒ Before reading stage

- **Stage1:** Grammar review

Aim: To review the past form of the verbs. The students practiced regular and irregular forms of verbs. For this purpose a few flash-cards were used. The students made a past form of verbs.

Time: 3 min.

- **Stage 2:** Vocabulary knowledge

Aim: To present unknown words to make the following reading activity easier for the students.

Time: 2 min.

I wrote four words on the board to make them clear. The learners rewrote them to their vocabularies. These words were: *giant*, *prisoner*, *sail*, and *goddess*.

- **Stage 3:** Prior knowledge activation

Aim: To connect the background knowledge to the topic of the text.

Time: 5 min

I elicited information from the students by using **questions of knowledge** according to the Bloom's taxonomy, which enabled to introduce the topic of the reading activity in an interactive way. The students had to think about the topic and also made a connection with already known facts in their minds. The purpose of these kinds of questions is to help the learners to become more interested in the topic and to be more curious about the reading material. The following table provides an overview of questions which were used to activate the prior knowledge of the students.

The questions which were asked are cited in the left column and examples of the learners' answers I managed to record with the help of my colleague are cited in the right column.

Teacher (Questions)	Learners (Examples of recorded answers)
<i>"Do you know what the myth is?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>"Myth is a story from our history but not real"</i>2. <i>"Myth is a Greek legend"</i>3. <i>"Myth is something that doesn't exist. "It is</i>

	<i>a story which someone writes."</i>
<i>"Can you recall some Greek or Rome myths from the history class you had last week?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Myth about Hercules." 2. "...about Romulus and Remus" 3. We talked about Achilles too!" 4. "...or Olympus where are gods."
<i>"Can you name some mythological characters?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Hercules and Xena." 2. "Achilles" 3. "Zeus" 4. "Aphrodite"
<i>"Do you have a favourite mythological character?"</i> <i>"How do you know him/her?"</i> <i>Do you know him/her from a book, television or computer game?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "I like Hercules. Because he was very strong. I know Hercules from television." 2. "I like Spiderman!" 3. "I like story of Romulus and Remus. We talked about it in the History. They had a wolf mother."
<i>"Do you know the story of Odysseus?"</i> <i>"Who was Odysseus?"</i> <i>"Do you know the author of this myth?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Yes, I know Odysseus. I think that he travels around the world." 2. No, I don't know but I know his name." 3. "I know the author but I forgot his name." <p><i>No one knew the author.</i></p>

- **Stage 4:** reading papers hand out

Aim: To provide the reading material to each learner in the class. Everyone got one sheet of paper with the text, picture and questions to the text.

Time: 1 min

- **Stage 5:** Prediction

Aim: To help to the learners to gain the gist about the content of the text.

Time: 3 min.

In the picture to the text there was a map of Odysseus route from Troy to his home Ithaca. The students could see in the map not only lands and islands but also many creatures inhabiting various places which Odysseus visited on his long journey home. This picture was an aid for practising the prediction skills. The students were asked to look at the picture and answer several questions. These kinds of questions are used to

activate the students' engagement with the text, which could help them to understand a text better. I asked **questions of knowledge** according to the Bloom' taxonomy:

Teacher (Questions)	Learners (Examples of the recorded answers)
<i>Look at the picture: "Can you guess what the story is going to be about?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "The story is about geography in the past." 2. "The story is about Odysseus travel around the world." 3. It is about Odysseus and people he met."
<i>"Why do you think there is a map in the picture?"</i> <i>"Which countries can you see in on the map?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Because there is a story about Odysseus' travelling." 2. "Because we can see where Odysseus was." 3. "...which places he visited." 4. "I can see Italy, Greek and Africa." 5. "...and there is Turkey too!"
<i>"Who do you think are the creatures in the picture?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "There is a Cyclop and ghost!" 2. "They live in these places."

⇒ During reading stage

- **Stage 6: Monitoring the comprehension during the first reading**

Aim: To read the first paragraph of the text (ignoring the grammar exercise for a while).

Time: 5 min

The learners read the first paragraph of the text (ignoring the grammar exercise for a while). One student read aloud the first part of the story then he was asked to stop. (I preferred reading aloud for two main reasons: it helped to the readers to pay attention and focus on reading better and they also could practice the correct pronunciation.) In order to support the ability of self-monitoring the comprehension during the reading I used questions practising visualizing the text, inferring and predicting outcomes. I used **questions of comprehension** (for prediction outcomes, inferring) and **questions of application** (for visualizing) according to the Bloom's taxonomy.

- **Stage 7: Comprehension questions**

Aim: Students became familiar with the questions they had to answer after the first reading.

Time: 2 min.

The learners were told that after the reading of the first paragraph they would answer several questions to the text. I told them to focus carefully on information about Cyclops and goddess Circe.

Teacher (Questions)	Learners (Examples of the recorded answers)
<p><i>“How do you think Cyclops looks like?”</i></p> <p><i>“Do you think they are scary?”</i></p> <p><i>“Why do you think the Cyclops kept Odysseus imprisoned prisoner?”</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>“They are certainly scary!”</i> 2. <i>“They are ugly and dirty.”</i> 3. <i>“...and they have only one eye.”</i> 4. <i>“They kept Odysseus because he they thought that he want to kill them.”</i> 5. <i>“They wanted to eat Odysseus because they are cannibals.”</i>
<p><i>“Do you believe that the goddess Circe will help Odysseus or not?”</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>“She will kill him.”</i> 2. <i>Yes, she will help him to go home.”</i> 3. <i>Yes, but he will get a quest.”</i>
<p><i>“Do you think that Odysseus will meet someone else before he gets home?”</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>“Yes, Odysseus will meet many creatures, Gods and people!”</i> 2. <i>“Yes, I think he will meet all the creatures in the picture.”</i>

- **Stage 8: Reading the whole text**

Aim: To read aloud (to focus better to the reading and also practice the correct pronunciation) the second part of the text in order to find the solution of the Odysseus journey and also confirm or disprove the student’s predictions about the following events.

Time: 3 min.

- **Stage 9: Grammar exercise**

Aim: To practice the past form of the verbs and distinguish between regular and irregular verbs.

Time: 5 min.

The student read the text for a second time silently to choose the correct version of the past form of the verbs. Only one possibility from the three options was correct.

- **Stage 10: Grammar exercise check**

Aim: To check the correct answers and explain those verbs which were not clear.

Time: 2 min.

⇒ **After-reading stage**

- **Stage 11: Making connections**

Aim: To develop the readers' ability to realize the relevance of the text to the real world.

Time: 3 min.

In order to achieve the aim of this stage it was suitable to use **questions of analysis** according to the Bloom's taxonomy. The questions which were asked in this stage are provided in the following table:

Teacher (Questions)	Learners (Examples of the recorded answers)
<i>"What was the reason of Odysseus voyage?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>"He wanted to go home from Troy."</i> 2. <i>"Because he was in a battle and now he wants to go home."</i>
<i>"Why did he have so many troubles to get</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>"Because the strong wind."</i> 2. <i>"Because the Cyclops arrested him."</i>

<i>home to Ithaca”</i>	3. “He had a bad luck and met bad creatures.”
<i>“How do you think Odysseus felt when he saw his home and wife after ten years?”</i>	1. “He was very happy, but very tired too.” 2. “He was old and forgot everything about his home.”

- **Stage 12: Returning to text**

Aim: To support the students’ ability to find (by returning to the text) important information.

Time: 3 min.

The students could find these questions on the second page of their reading papers (exercise B). I used for this stage **questions of analysis** according to the Bloom’s taxonomy. Questions are formed as a multiple-choice activity. From the four possible options only one was correct. The learners did the task individually. After the time limit the answers were checked and proved by the text.

Questions + possible options	Learners’ choices
<i>“How was the goddess who helped to Odysseus? called”</i> <i>a) Cyrus</i> <i>b) Circe</i> <i>c) Cyria</i> <i>d) Circle</i>	Total of students in the class: 12 a) 0 b) 10 c) 0 d) 1 Correct answer: b)
<i>“How was the land of the Dead?” called</i> <i>a) Aaron</i> <i>b) Addes</i> <i>c) Hades</i> <i>d) Monsterland</i>	a) 0 b) 0 c) 0 d) 12 e) 0 Correct answer: d)
<i>“Who were Sirens?”</i> <i>a) Deadly beauties</i> <i>b) Ugly witches</i> <i>c) One-eyed monsters</i> <i>d) Kind princesses</i>	a) 10 b) 1 c) 0 d) 1 Correct answer: a)

- **Stage 13: Map drawing**

Aim: To practice the skill of returning to text in order to find important information, to realize the text as a meaningful story.

Time: 5 min.

The students were asked to draw the Odysseus route into the map (picture to the text). This task helped the learners to realize individual information stated in the text. This activity helped them to develop the analysing skill. The learners could find this task on the second page of the reading papers (exercise C). After a time limit, the maps were checked.

- **Stage 14: Summarizing**

Aim: to teach the readers to be able to grasp the text as a whole and highlight the main, summarizing idea, understand the purpose of the text and also express their own opinion about the content of the text.

Time: 3 min.

I decided to use the **question of evaluation** according to the Bloom's taxonomy as a final question of the reading and led a short discussion based on the question. The students could find these questions on the second page of the reading papers (exercise D).

Teacher's question	Learners (Examples of the recorded answers)
<i>"What do you think, is it possible that Homer's story of Odysseus can be based on a real adventure of a man returning back home from a war?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "No, this is certainly only a story written by Homer." 2. "I think, it is possible that some man who wanted to return home in the past could travel for a very long time, but I don't think that creatures from the story about Odysseus existed." 3. "I think this is possible, but I think that monsters don't exist too." 4. "I think the same." 5. "I think, this is only a myth and it can't be based on a real story."

Reflection:

Before-reading stage:

In this stage of the reading activity I used questioning to support prior knowledge activation and prediction. The aim was to introduce the topic of the text and motivate the learners to be interested and curious about the text. They also could gain a certain gist about the actual content of the text they were going to read. As I prepared the reading about the famous myth of Odysseus and his adventurous route home from a war, I introduced the activity by asking questions about myths and mythical characters in general. This proved as an effective beginning. The learners in the class had already a few ideas about the Greek mythology from the history and also Czech literature classes so they did not hesitate to provide answers. They tried to explain what the myth is and they liked to talk about their favourite characters. All the learners tried to find their own answers. They answered for example: *“I like Hercules because he was very strong...”* or *“I like story of Romulus and Remus... they had a wolf mother!”* This was a useful stage as they could activate their language and also curiosity into the topic, which helped to motivate them to read. In the next stage I gave them the worksheets with the text and picture. In the picture there was a map of Odysseus’ route. This picture helped me to develop skill of prediction. The aim of prediction was to gain the gist about the potential content of the text. The learners seemed to be attracted by the picture. They were looking at the picture carefully and tried to answer my questions. Most of them were able to predict the character of the text. Although they did not know exactly the story of Odysseus they knew that they were going to read about some travel experiences of some hero. The aim of this stage was successfully achieved. I appreciated their interest in the reading. The fact that they could contribute to the discussion about the story helped to strengthen their confidence, which allowed overcoming the learner’s concerns to express themselves and consequently helped to break the hesitance to answer the questions I asked them during the activity.

During-reading stage:

The main aim of the during-reading stage was to monitor the learner's comprehension. I used questions of inferring, predicting outcomes and visualizing to support and verify the learner's understanding of the first half of their reading. This was extremely useful for the learners who had problems to realize the plot of the story or remember the characters. The questions which I used in this stage helped to the learners after a short section of a text to stop and check if they understood correctly. This gave them also time to realize the names of the characters and their roles in the story. Especially during predicting outcomes the learners cooperated actively. These kinds of questions helped them to guess the events that occurred later in the text, which could help them to understand better the following information. For example, one of the answers to the question about the probable story development was: *"I think that Odysseus will meet many creatures, Gods and people!"* Achieving their interest in the following part of the text we naturally moved into the end of the text.

After-reading stage:

The main aim of the after-reading stage was to extend and strengthen the learner's understanding of the text. I used questions developing ability of making connections, returning to text and summarizing. By asking questions of making connections and returning to text the learners should have verified if they really understood the text. When they made connections, they tried to link the story to their own experiences and thus real life. For example, the learners were asked to think about the feelings of Odysseus when he saw his wife after many years for the first time. The learners really tried to imagine how such a situation could be like. Some of them looked very sympathetic. I appreciated how they easily connected the story to real life and considered the situation critically. They answered for example: *"He was old and forgot everything about his home."* As they personalized the story they could remember the general content better. Moreover, they gained an opportunity to go back to the text and remind some detailed information by doing the multiple-choice questioning activity. The results from this activity also proved that they really understand the meaning of the text as they were able to identify the motives and causes of the story. Finally, I asked

them a summarizing question in order to develop their ability to grasp the text as a whole. The aim of this question was to elicit the learner's own opinion about the possibility that the story can be true. They answered for example: *"I think, this is only a myth and it can't be based on a real story."* As all of them were able to make their own conclusion based on the story content I assumed that they were able to understand the text well and therefore they could evaluate it throughout employing their own personal point of view.

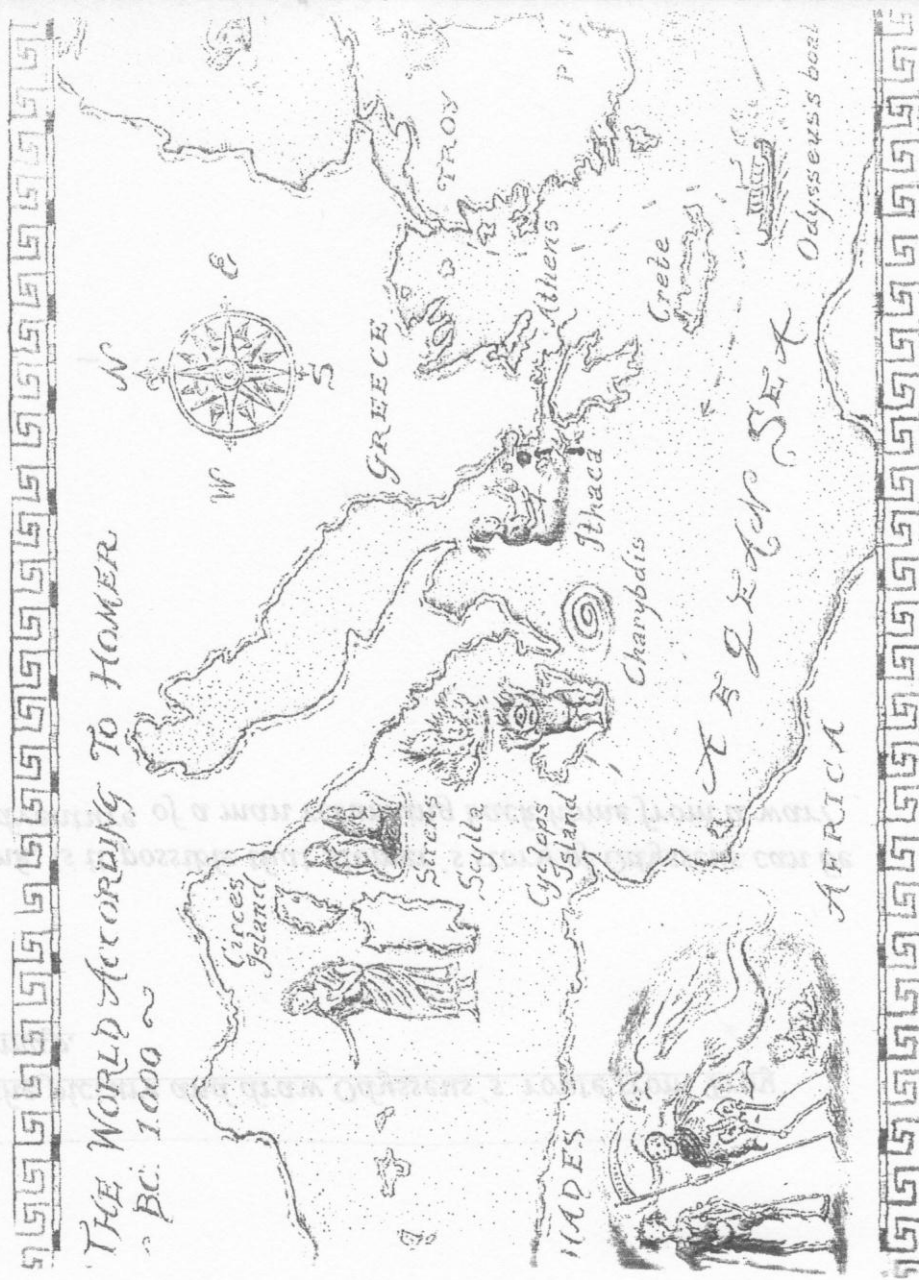
The story of Odysseus

In Homer's story, Odysseus **was/were/is** a Greek leader who **fought/fought/fights** a terrible war against the Trojans in Troy. The Greek finally **won/won/wan,** and after the last battle Odysseus wanted to return home to the island of Ithaca. Although it was only about 500 km, the journey **taken/took/takes** him a very long time. First a strong north wind **blew/blew/blown** him round Crete to a big island where the one-eyed giants called Cyclops **love/lived/live.** They **kept/kept/keeps** him prisoner, but after many adventures he **escape/escaped/escapes.** Because of the terrible storms, he sailed north again, away from Ithaca, up to the island of the goddess Circe.

Circe **were/was/been** kind, and **sent/send/sends** him down to Hades, the land of the Dead, to get help for his journey home. From there he **gone/went/goes** back to Circe's Island. When he **leaved/left/leaves** the island he **gone/went/goes** along the coast past the beautiful but deadly Sirens and through the dangerous waters between Cyclops island and the mainland, where two terrible monsters lived. With a great difficulty, he **sale/sailed/sales** past them, and finally he **sale/sailed/sales** across the sea to Ithaca. His journey **taked/took/takes** him ten years - an average of 50 km a year. But after all that time, his wife Penelope was still waiting for him!

A) Look at the picture and answer the questions:

1. Can you guess what is the story going to be about?
2. Why do you think there is a map in the picture?
3. Which countries can you see in the map?
4. Who do you think are the creatures in the picture?



B) Answer the questions:

1. How was called the Goddess who helped to Odysseus?

- a) Cyrus
- b) Circe
- c) Cyria
- d) Circle

2. How was called the land of the Dead?

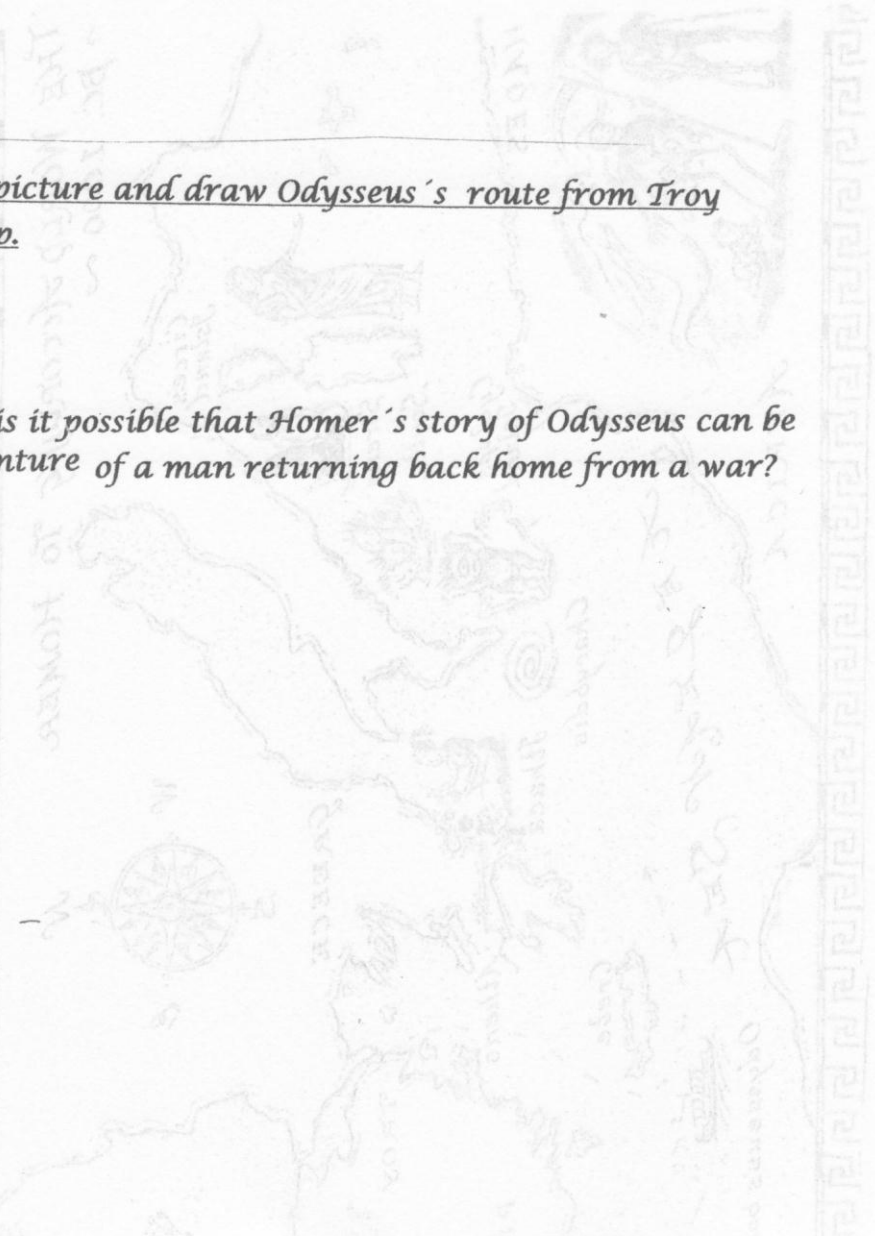
- a) Aaron
- b) Addes
- c) Hades
- d) Monsterland

3. Who were Sirens?

- a) Deadly beauties
- b) Ugly witches
- c) One-eyed monsters
- d) Kind princesses

C) Now, return to the picture and draw Odysseus's route from Troy to Ithaca on the map.

D) What do you think, is it possible that Homer's story of Odysseus can be based on a real adventure of a man returning back home from a war?



b. Reading activity 2: Icarus

Class: 8.A/B, group 1

Aims: To practice past forms of verbs, to selected reading skills, to test the hypothesis that using appropriately chose, formulated and sequenced questions that fit particular situations can involve the learners into the reading process effectively and help them better understand a text.

Learning objectives: The learners should be able to make the correct past form of the verbs from the present infinitive form. Moreover, they should learn using particular before-reading, during-reading and after-reading strategies.

Materials: Flash-cards, reading materials (one copy for each learner).

Thesis focus: Before-reading questions (Prior knowledge activation questions, questions of prediction), during-reading questions (monitoring comprehension during reading: predicting outcomes, inferring, visualizing) and after-reading questions (questions developing making connection, returning to text and synthetizing question).

Time: 45 min

⇒ Before reading stage

- **Stage1:** Grammar review

Aim: To review the past form of the verbs. The students practiced regular and irregular forms of verbs. For this purpose a few flash-cards were used. The students made a past form of verbs.

Time: 3 min.

- **Stage 2: Vocabulary knowledge**

Aim: To present unknown words to make the following reading activity easier for the students.

Time: 3 min.

I wrote five words on the board to make them clear. The learners rewrote them to their vocabularies. These words were: *inventor, slave, to punish, wax, and feathers*.

- **Stage 3: Prior knowledge activation**

Aim: To connect the background knowledge to the topic of the text.

Time: 5 min

I elicited information from the students by using **questions of knowledge** according to the Bloom's taxonomy, which enabled to introduce the topic of the reading activity in an interactive way. The students had to think about the topic and also make a connection with already known facts in their minds. The purpose of these kinds of questions is to help the learners to become more interested in the topic. The process of teacher's questioning in order to elicit information from the learners is similar to the reading activity 1 realized with the second English class group. The following table provides an overview of questions which were used to activate the prior knowledge. The questions which were asked are cited in the left column and examples of the learners' answers I managed to record with the help of my colleague are cited in the right column.

Teacher (Questions)	Learners (Examples of the recorded answers)
<i>"Do you know what the myth is?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Myth is something not real. It is what people wrote." 2. "Myth doesn't really exist." 3. "I think it existed! Maybe not all myths but some of them certainly existed."
<i>"Can you recall some Greek or Rome</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "About antic Gods. For example Poseidon and Zeus."

<i>myth from the history class you had last week?"</i>	2. "Myth about Achilles and his foot" 3. "Hercules" 4. "Romulus and Remus"
<i>"Do you have a favourite mythological character?"</i> <i>"How do you know him/her?"</i> <i>Do you know him/her from a book, television or computer game?"</i>	1. "I like Zeus. He is the greatest God and everyone has to do what he wants." 2. "I like story of Perseus. It was a good film!" 3. "I too! He was in the battle with Titans!" 4. "...and I like the Titans!"
<i>"Do you know the story of Icarus?"</i> <i>"Who was Icarus?"</i>	1. "No but I think he was a mythological person." 2. "I don't know for sure..." 3. "I think Icarus was a God with wings." 4. "I don't know who Icarus was."

- **Stage 4:** reading papers hand out

Aim: To provide the reading material to each learner in the class. Everyone got one sheet of paper with the text, picture and questions to the text.

Time: 1 min.

- **Stage 5:** Prediction

Aim: To help to the learners to gain the gist about the content of the text.

Time: 3 min.

In the picture to the text there was an illustration of Icarus with large wings jumping from the cliff. This picture was an aid for practising the prediction skills. The students were asked to look at the picture and answer several questions. These kinds of questions were used to activate the students' engagement with the text, which could help them to understand a text better. I asked **questions of knowledge** according to the Bloom' taxonomy:

Teacher (Questions)	Learners (Examples of the recorded answers)
<i>“Look at the picture: “Can you guess who is the man with wings?”</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>“It is someone who wants to fly.”</i> 2. <i>“I think he is an angel.”</i> 3. <i>“I think it is a man with wings.”</i> 4. <i>“Is it Icarus?”</i>
<i>“What do you think he is doing?”</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>“He is learning how to fly.”</i> 2. <i>“...but if he is an angel, he can fly!”</i> 3. <i>“I think he is crazy. I think he has paper wings and he think he can fly and he will die.”</i> 4. <i>“I think it is a myth hero with wings.”</i> 5. <i>“Maybe he is some god who is flying.”</i>

⇒ **During reading stage**

- **Stage 6: Monitoring the comprehension during the first reading**

Aim: To support the ability of self-monitoring the comprehension during the reading.

Time: 5 min

The learners read the first paragraph of the text (ignoring the grammar exercise for a while). One student read aloud the first part of the story then he was asked to stop. (I preferred reading aloud for two main reasons: it helped to the readers to pay attention and focus on reading better and they also could practice the correct pronunciation.) In order to support the ability of self-monitoring the comprehension during the reading I used questions practising visualizing and predicting outcomes. I used **questions of comprehension** (for prediction outcomes, inferring) and **questions of application** (for visualizing) according to the Bloom’s taxonomy.

- **Stage 7: Comprehension questions**

Aim: Students became familiar with the questions they had to answer after the first reading.

Time: 2 min.

The learners were told that after the reading of the first paragraph they would answer several questions to the text. I told them to focus carefully on information about Minotaur and Daedalus' plan to escape from the prison.

Teacher (Questions)	Learners (Examples of the recorded answers)
<p><i>"How do you think Minotaur looked like?"</i></p> <p><i>"Do you think he was scary?"</i></p> <p><i>"Why do you think Icarus with his father helped to Theseus to kill Minotaur?"</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Minotaur was an ugly monster!" 2. "Minotaur was a giant monster." 3. "I think Icarus and his father helped to kill him because he was dangerous to the people." 4. "I think he was very scary."
<p><i>"Do you think Daedalus made functioning wings?"</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Yes, he made wings and they will fly." 2. "Yes, they will fly away from the prison." 3. "I think Daedalus didn't make good wings."
<p><i>"Do you think they will finally escape from the prison?"</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Yes, they will fly away and nobody catch them." 2. "I think they will die. It is too hard to escape." 3. "I think the king will catch them."

- **Stage 8: Reading the whole text**

Aim: To read aloud (to focus better to the reading and also practice the correct pronunciation) the second part of the text in order to find the solution of the Icarus story and also confirm or disprove the student's predictions about the following events.

Time: 3 min.

- **Stage 9: Grammar exercise**

Aim: To practice the past form of the verbs.

Time: 5 min.

The students read the text for a second time silently and fill in the gaps the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

- **Stage 10: Grammar exercise check**

Aim: To check the correct answers and explain those verbs which were not clear.

Time: 2 min.

⇒ **After-reading stage**

- **Stage 11: Making connections**

Aim: To develop the readers' ability to realize the relevance of the text to the real world.

Time: 5 min.

In order to achieve the aim of this stage it was suitable to use **questions of analysis** according to the Bloom's taxonomy. The questions which were asked in this stage are provided in the following table:

Teacher (Questions)	Learners (Examples of the recorded answers)
<i>"What was the reason of Icarus fall?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "He didn't fly at medium altitude." 2. "Because he didn't listen to his father and wanted to fly higher." 3. "Because he wanted more and more and this killed him." 4. "Because he was stupid and he didn't know that the wax can melt."
<i>"Why Icarus didn't listen to the father's advice?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "He didn't believe to him." 2. "Because Icarus was stupid." 3. "Because children often don't listen to their parents and then they have big problems."
<i>"Would you listen to the Daedalus' advice or would you fly higher to enjoy the flight?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "I would listen." 3. "I don't know because flying higher is adrenalin." 4. "I am afraid of highs. I would listen!" 5. "I think parents know what can happen to us."

- **Stage 12: Returning to text**

Aim: To support the students' ability to find (by returning to the text) important information.

Time: 4 min.

The students could find these questions on the second page of their reading papers (exercise B). I used for this stage **questions of analysis** according to the Bloom's taxonomy. Questions are formed as a multiple-choice activity. From the four possible options only one was correct. The learners did the task individually. After the time limit the answers were checked and proved by the text.

Questions + possible options	Learners' choices
<p><i>"Why were Icarus and Daedalus imprisoned?"</i></p> <p>a) Because they helped to kill the king b) Because they helped to kill the Minotaur c) Because they helped to kill the Titan. d) Because they helped to save the Minotaur.</p>	<p>Total of students in the class: 11</p> <p>a) 0 b) 11 c) 0 d) 0</p> <p>Correct answer: b)</p>
<p><i>"Which materials Daedalus used to build the wings?"</i></p> <p>a) Wood + glass + feathers b) Wood + glue + feathers c) Wood + honey + feathers d) Wood + wax + feathers</p>	<p>a) 0 b) 0 c) 2 d) 9</p> <p>Correct answer: d)</p>
<p><i>"How is called the sea into which Icarus had fallen?"</i></p> <p>a) Caspian sea b) Icarian sea c) Daedalus sea d) The sea of Dead</p>	<p>a) 0 b) 11 c) 0 d) 0</p> <p>Correct answer: b)</p>

- **Stage 13: Summarizing**

Aim: to teach the readers to be able to grasp the text as a whole and highlight the main, summarizing idea, understand the purpose of the text and also express their opinion about the content of the text.

Time: 4 min.

I decided to use the **question of synthesis** according to the Bloom's taxonomy as a final question of the reading activity and led a short discussion based on the question. The learners could find these questions on the second page of the reading papers (exercise D):

Teacher's question	Learners answers (Examples from the reading papers)
<i>"Is there any moral for us from the story of Icarus?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>"Yes, the moral is that we should listen what the old and smart people tell us especially when they are our parents."</i> 2. <i>"...that we must listen to your parents advices."</i> 3. <i>"Yes, that we should always choose the middle way."</i> 4. <i>"That we should think about what we do and that we should want in our live not too much but not too little too."</i> 5. <i>"That the middle way is gold".</i>

Reflection

Before-reading stage:

This reading activity was prepared for the parallel group 1 of the English class so the reading plan was very similar to the previous reading plan realized a day before in the group 2. In the before-reading stage I also used questioning to support prior knowledge activation and prediction at first. The aim was to introduce the topic of the text and motivate the learners to be interested and curious about the text. It was also important to help to the learners to gain a certain gist about the actual content of the text they were

going to read. I prepared the reading about another famous myth of Icarus. The activity was introduced by asking questions about myths and mythical characters in general as I did it previously in the activity 1 because this proved as an effective beginning. As all of the learners could contribute to the discussion they were motivated to work actively. The learners in the class had already a few ideas about the Greek mythology from the history and also Czech literature classes in the same level as the learners in the previous group 2 so they easily answered the questions. They were supposed to explain what the myth is and talk about their favourite characters. The learners in this group were more enthusiastic about the topic than in the previous group. For example, I asked them in the prior knowledge activation stage about their favourite mythological characters and one boy answered for example: *"I like Zeus. He is the greatest God and everyone has to do what he wants!"* They even remembered some of the antic mythological Gods. On the other hand I expected that they already heard about Icarus. None from the class was able to guess at least. But this was not essential anyway. In the next stage I gave them the worksheets with the text and the picture. In the picture there was Icarus with wings just about to jump from the cliff and fly. This picture helped me to develop skill of prediction. The aim was to help the learners to gain the gist about the potential content of the text, which could help them to understand better the following information. The learners were very attracted by the picture. They tried to answer my question who is probably the man in the picture and what is he doing. They thought for example that *he is an angel or God called Icarus*. Finally, the learners were really curious who the strange man with wing could be so the aim of this stage was achieved successfully.

During-reading stage:

The main aim of the during-reading stage was to monitor the learner's comprehension. I used questions of inferring, predicting outcomes and visualizing to support and verify the learner's understanding of the first half of their reading. As this proved in the reading activity 1 extremely useful for those learners who had problems to realize the plot of the story or remember the characters I decided not to neglect questioning in this stage. Questions which I used in this stage helped to the learners after a short section of a text to stop and check if they understood correctly. Especially predicting outcomes would not be possible to do if the learners wouldn't make themselves sure that they understood the preceding plot sufficiently. I asked them for example about their

prediction about the Icarus' escape. The learners considered the issue critically and I obtained for example answer: *"I think they will die. It is too hard to escape."* They gained a useful idea about the probable future events of the story. They had many ideas what was probably going to happen with Icarus and therefore it was easier for them to continue with the reading as they had an idea what to suspect in the second part of the text.

After-reading stage:

The aim of the after-reading stage was to extend and strengthen the learner's understanding of the text. I used questions developing ability of making connections, returning to text and synthetizing. By asking questions of making connections and returning to text the learners should have verified if they really understood the text. When they made connections, they tried to link the story to their own experiences and thus real life. For example, the learners were asked to think about the real reason of the Icarus fall. The learners at first answered that the reason was just a "technical" (the wax holding the wings together has melted) but then they began to think about the actual reason of the Icarus tragedy. They realized that Icarus did not listen to the wise advice and that he also wanted more than it was necessary to escape. I appreciated that the learners made an effort to think deeper about the problem. They proved to think critically and independently about the issue by the answers they provided. For example, one girl answered: *"Because he wanted more and more and this killed him."* They also gained an opportunity to go back to the text and remind some detailed information by doing the multiple-choice questioning activity. The results from this activity also proved that the learners understood the text well. Finally, I asked them a synthetizing question in order to develop their ability to grasp the text as a whole and realize the purpose of the story. The aim of this question was to help to the learners to realize the moral of the myth and consequently understand it's purpose. Most of the learners understood the moral well and provided for example such a great answer as *"the middle way is the gold way."* I assumed that the learners understood not only the actual text but also its deeper sense and meaning.

A: Look at the picture and answer the questions:

- Can you guess who the man with wings in the picture is?
- What do you think he is doing?



Icarus

Icarus (be) the son of the inventor

Daedalus and a slave named Naucratis. King Minos of Crete (imprison)

Daedalus and Icarus in the Labyrinth to punish them for helping the hero Theseus to

kill the monster called the Minotaur. Daedalus (know) that Minos

..... (control) any escape routes by land or sea, but Minos (can not)

prevent an escape by flight. So Daedalus (use) his skills to build wings for

himself and Icarus. He (decide) to make two pairs of wings by adhering
feathers to a wooden frame with wax.

When their wings (be) ready, Daedalus (warn) Icarus to fly at
medium altitude. If he (fly) too high, the sun (can) melt the wax of
his wings, and the sea could dampen the feathers if he (fly) too low.

Once they had escaped Crete, Icarus (become) excited by flight. Ignoring
his father's warning, he (fly) higher and higher. The sun (melt) the
wax holding his wings together, and the boy (fall) into the water and
..... (drown). Daedalus (look) down to see feathers floating in the
waves, and (realize) what had happened. He (bury) his son on
an island which would be called Icaria, and the sea into which Icarus had fallen
would ever after be called the Icarian Sea.

B: Put the verbs into the correct form

C: Answer the questions. Only one answer is correct.

1. Why were Icarus and Daedalus imprisoned?

- a) Because they helped to kill the king
- b) Because they helped to kill the Minotaur
- c) Because they helped to kill the Titan.
- d) Because they helped to save the Minotaur.

2. Which materials Daedalus used to build the wings?

- a) Wood + glass + feathers
- b) Wood + glue + feathers
- c) Wood + honey + feathers
- d) Wood + wax + feathers

3. How is called the sea into which Icarus had fallen ?

- a) Caspian sea
- b) Icarian sea
- c) Daedalus sea
- d) The sea of Dead

D: Discussion: Is there any moral for us from the story of Icarus?

c. Reading activity 3: The legend of Atlantis

Class: 8.A/B, group 2

Aims: To practice past forms of verbs, to develop selected reading skills, to test the hypothesis that using appropriately chose, formulated and sequenced questions that fit particular situations can involve the learners into the reading process effectively and help them better understand a text.

Learning objectives: The learners should be able to make the correct past form of the verbs from the present infinitive form. Moreover, they should learn using particular before-reading, during-reading and after-reading strategies.

Materials: Flash-cards, reading materials (one copy for each learner).

Thesis focus: Before-reading questions (Prior knowledge activation questions, questions of prediction), during-reading questions (monitoring comprehension during reading: visualizing) and after-reading questions (returning to text and summarizing questions).

Time: 45 min

⇒ Before reading stage

- **Stage1:** Grammar review

Aim: To review the past form of the verbs. The students practiced regular and irregular forms of verbs. For this purpose a few flash-cards were used. The students made a past form of verbs.

Time: 3 min.

- **Stage 2: Vocabulary knowledge**

Aim: To present unknown words to make the following reading activity easier for the students.

Time: 2 min.

I wrote three words on the board to make them clear. The learners rewrote them to their vocabularies. These words were: *ancient* and *temple*. The third word was *Plato* – the name of the famous antic philosopher. I explained very briefly to the learners who he was and that the Czech form of this name is “*Platon*”.

- **Stage 3: Prior knowledge activation**

Aim: To connect the background knowledge to the topic of the text.

Time: 6 min

I elicited information from the students by using **questions of knowledge** according to the Bloom’s taxonomy, which enabled to introduce the topic of the reading activity in an interactive way. The students had to think about the topic and also make a connection with already known facts in their minds. The purpose of these kinds of questions is to help the learners to become more interested in the topic and to be more curious about the reading material. As this English group 2 did the similar reading activity with the mythological topic, the questions of prior knowledge activation are different from the activity 1. The following table provides an overview of questions which were used in this stage. The questions were asked and answered orally. The questions which were asked are cited in the left column and examples of the learners’ answers I managed to record with the help of my colleague are cited in the right column.

Teacher (Questions)	Learners (Answers)
<i>“Last lesson we talked about the myth of Odysseus. Do you remember what the myth is?”</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Yes, it is a legend.” 2. “Myth is a story which can be only fantasy but also a real story.” 3. “We don’t know what part of the myth is a real and what part of the myth is a legend.”
<i>“Have you ever heard about Atlantis (Atlántida in Czech)?”</i> <i>“What it can be?”</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “No” 2. “I think Atlantis is a film.” 3. “It is a city.” 4. “Yes, from a television. Atlantis is a spaceship which looks like a ground.” 5. “I know it too from the television!”
<i>“Yes, Atlantis is a famous space-ship from a serial, but do you know the original myth about Atlantis?”</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “No, but I think it is something what existed in the past.” 2. “I don’t know.” 3. “I think Atlantis was a big city and it is a myth too.”

- **Stage 4:** reading papers hand out

Aim: To provide the reading material to each learner in the class. Everyone got one sheet of paper with the text, picture and questions to the text.

Time: 1 min.

- **Stage 5:** Prediction

Aim: To help to the learners to gain the gist about the content of the text.

Time: 4 min.

In the picture to the text there was an illustration of the legendary Atlantis. The students could see in the picture the large square with monumental buildings or antic temples with pillars. There are also people dressed in antic clothes. This picture functioned as an aid for practising the skills of prediction. The students were asked to look at the picture and answer several questions. These kinds of questions were used to activate the students’ engagement with the text, which could help them to understand a text better. I asked **questions of knowledge** according to the Bloom’ taxonomy:

Teacher (Questions)	Learners (Examples of the recorded answers)
<i>Look at the picture: “Can you guess what the legend of Atlantis is going to be about?”</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “The legend will be about the beautiful city in Atlantis.” 2. “...and about the people.” 3. The legend will be about Atlantis and how Atlantis looked like and how people lived there.”
<i>“What do you think people of Atlantis liked to do?”</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Talk to each other.” 2. “Build the cities.” 3. “I think they liked to build wonderful cities and buildings.” 4. “... and they liked to have horses.”
<i>“According to the picture, do you think the people of Atlantis were rich or poor?”</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “I think they were very rich because it is expensive to make this city.” 2. “I think they had a lot of money.”

⇒ **During reading stage**

- **Stage 6: Monitoring the comprehension during the first reading**

Aim: To support the ability of self-monitoring the comprehension during the reading.

Time: 5 min

The learners read the first paragraph of the text (ignoring the grammar exercise for a while). One student read aloud the first part of the story then he was asked to stop. (I preferred reading aloud for two main reasons: it helped to the readers to pay attention and focus on reading better and they could also practice the correct pronunciation.) I used questions practising visualizing. For these kinds of questions I asked **questions of application** according to the Bloom’s taxonomy.

- **Stage 7: Comprehension questions**

Aim: Students became familiar with the questions they had to answer after the first reading.

Time: 2 min.

The learners were told that after the reading of the first paragraph they would answer several questions to the text. I told them to focus carefully on information about the Plato's description of the people of Atlantis.

Teacher (Questions)	Learners (Examples of the recorded answers)
<i>"How do you think the cities of Atlantis looked like?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>"They were very clever because he studied hard so I think they looked intelligent."</i> 2. <i>"They looked like Greeks."</i> 3. <i>"I think they were beautiful."</i>
<i>"What kind of clothes did the people of Atlantis wear?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>"They wore beautiful dresses like antic people."</i> 2. <i>"Yes, I think the same. Women wore long dresses and men uniforms."</i> 3. <i>"I think they wore only a small dress."</i>
<i>"How do you think the people of Atlantis behaved?"</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>"They studied every day and did nothing else."</i> 2. <i>"I think they were smart and so they were good to each other."</i> 3. <i>"People in Atlantis were very friendly and nice."</i> 4. <i>"... and maybe they liked to have a peace in Atlantis."</i>

- **Stage 8: Reading the whole text**

Aim: To read aloud (to focus better to the reading and also practice the correct pronunciation) the second part of the text in order to find answers to the previous question about people of Atlantis – how they lived and looked like according to the legend. The learner's predictions were confirmed or disproved.

Time: 4 min.

- **Stage 9: Grammar exercise**

Aim: To practice the past form of the verbs.

Time: 5 min.

The student read the text for a second time silently to fill in the gaps the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

- **Stage 10:** Grammar exercise check

Aim: To check the correct answers and explain those verbs which were not clear.

Time: 3 min.

⇒ **After-reading stage**

- **Stage 11:** Returning to text

Aim: To support the students' ability to find (by returning to the text) important information.

Time: 5 min.

The students could find these questions on the second page of their reading papers (exercise B). I used for this stage **questions of analysis** according to the Bloom's taxonomy. Questions are formed as a multiple-choice activity. From the four possible options only one was correct. The learners did the task individually. After the time limit the answers were checked and proved by the text.

Questions + possible options	Learners' choices
<p><i>"Who wrote the legend about Atlantis"</i></p> <p>a) Socrates b) Aristotle c) Homer d) Plato</p>	<p>Total of students in the class: 11</p> <p>a) 0 b) 0 c) 2 d) 9</p> <p>Correct answer: d)</p>
<p><i>"When did the children of Atlantis start to learn to write and read according to the legend?"</i></p> <p>a) When they were 8 years old b) When they were 5 years old c) When they were 3 years old d) They didn't learn to write and read</p>	<p>a) 0 b) 0 c) 11 d) 0</p> <p>Correct answer: c)</p>

<p><i>“What material did the people of Atlantis use to decorate their houses according to the legend?”</i></p> <p>a) Gold b) Silver c) Platinum d) Paper</p>	<p>a) 11 b) 0 c) 0 d) 0</p> <p>Correct answer: a)</p>
<p><i>“What unusual device did the people of Atlantis use at that time?”</i></p> <p>a) Washing machine b) Electricity c) Simple computers d) Functioning water system</p>	<p>a) 0 b) 0 c) 0 d) 11</p> <p>Correct answer: d)</p>

- **Stage 12: Summarizing**

Aim: to teach the readers to be able to grasp the text as a whole and highlight the main, summarizing idea, understand the purpose of the text and also express their own opinion about the content of the text.

Time: 5 min.

I decided to use the **question of evaluation** according to the Bloom’s taxonomy as a final task of the reading activity and led a short discussion based on this question. The students could find these questions on the second page of the reading papers (exercise D):

Teacher’s question	Learners (Examples of the recorded answers)
<p><i>“Would you like to live in Atlantis?”</i></p> <p><i>“Why yes/why not?”</i></p>	<p>1. “No, because the children of Atlantis must learn to write and read when we are playing with toys.”</p> <p>2. “No, I don’t like going to school in three years!”</p> <p>3. “No, because they must study and work hard every day.”</p> <p>4. I think the same. I think they have very hard life.</p>
<p><i>“Which theory of Atlantis you believe or like the most?”</i></p>	<p>1. “That Atlantis is out of our planet. I think that it was not here because no one</p>

<p>“Why?”</p>	<p><i>discovered it.”</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. <i>“...that Atlantis still exists somewhere. I like the idea that it still exists.”</i> 3. <i>“I like that Atlantis is in space like in the film about Atlantis because it is a good idea.”</i> 4. <i>“I don’t believe in Atlantis because it is a fairy-tail for small children.”</i>
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Reflections:

Before-reading stage:

This reading activity was prepared for the English group 2. As the learners from this group did also the reading activity 1, it was necessary to slightly modify the design of the reading activity 3. For example it was purposeless to ask repeatedly the learners about *what the myth is* or *which mythical characters they knew/liked the most* in the prior knowledge activation stage. These kinds of questions they had already answered in the previous lesson when I introduced the story of Odysseus. For the second reading activity in the same class it was sufficient enough to remind (by asking the questions of knowledge) what we did the last lesson to make the connection between the last and the actual reading activity. After making connections with the previous reading I asked questions introducing the new topic. I prepared the reading about famous legend of Atlantis by Plato. I found out that the learners had already heard about Atlantis but they were not able to explain what it exactly was. Most of them, (but not all of them) answered: *“Atlantis was a spaceship”* or *“Atlantis is a film”*. However, this was the answer I expected to gain from them as I know that teenagers like to watch it in recent times. Telling them that their favourite sci-fi serial is based on a different legend of the mythological country helped me to make them curious about the real meaning of the Atlantis. In the next stage I gave them the worksheets with the text and the picture. In the picture there was an illustration of an antic square of Atlantis with buildings and people. This picture helped me to develop the learners’ skill of prediction. The aim was to help them to gain the gist about the potential content of the text. The learners soon realized that the text is going to be about some antic city or people living there not a spaceship for example. Their answers to my questions of prediction were surprisingly

correct in contrast with their assumptions before they saw the illustration. I assumed that especially in this activity 3 the illustration helped them to realize what the text was probably going to be about so the aim of the before-reading questioning was achieved successfully. The learners had an idea about the text, which was the purpose of using questions in this stage.

During-reading stage:

The main aim of the during-reading stage was to monitor the learner's comprehension. As the character of the text was rather descriptive than narrative (the whole text described the Atlantis and the people living there and had no plot development) it was for example purposes to ask questions of prediction the future events. I decided to use preferentially questions of visualizing in this stage. The text contained information about the appearance and characteristics of the country and the people who lived there according to the legend. Considering this aspect of the text, the most beneficial for the learners was using their imagination and visualizing as a tool to their better understanding and remembering the information provided by the text. I asked the learners for example, how the cities of Atlantis looked like or how the people of Atlantis behaved and I obtained reflective answers, for example: "*I think they were smart and so good to each other.*" After reading the first paragraph, the learners had to consider the information from the first part of the reading to answer the questions. They had to stop and realize what they read before. This helped them to organize their thoughts and check if they had understood the first part of the text correctly. After this stage the learners read the rest of the text with no obvious difficulties.

After-reading stage:

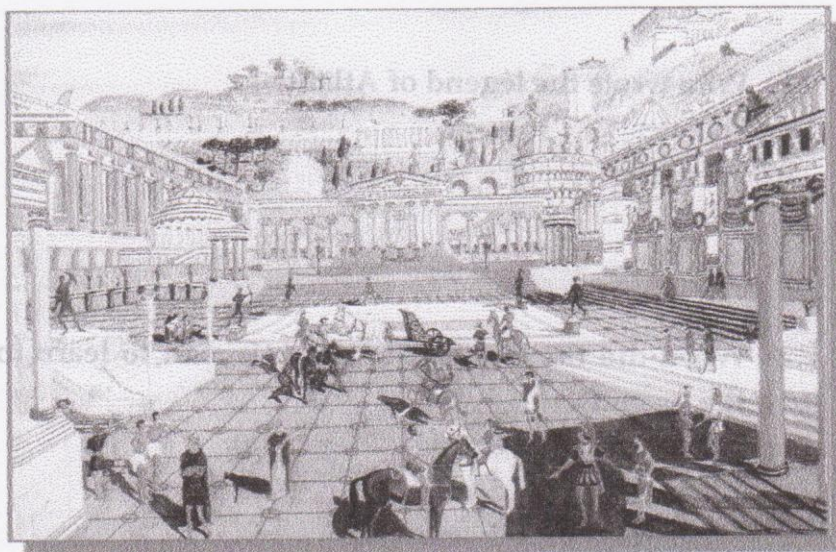
The main aim of the after-reading stage was to extend and strengthen the learner's understanding of the text. I used questions developing ability of returning to text and summarizing. The learners gained an opportunity to go back to the text and remind some detailed information by doing the multiple-choice questioning activity. By asking

these kinds of questions the learners could make themselves sure about some important facts from the text. Finally, I asked them two summarizing questions in order to help to the learners to make their own opinion about the legend and also express their own point of view. This is possible only when the learners understood the text well. These two final questions helped to the learners to think about the content of the text, to grasp the text as a whole, make their own conclusions and therefore understand the text better. For example, one of the questions was if the learners would like to live in Atlantis and why yes/no. The answer to this question required the answer based on the consideration of all the aspect mentioned in the text. The learners had to recall all of the information about the advantageous and disadvantageous aspects of living in Atlantis and evaluate them consequently to make their own opinion and answer the question. The learners answered for example: *“No, because the children of Atlantis must learn to write and read when we are playing with toys!”* This task proved that the learners really understood the text and also reflected the content critically.

The legend of Atlantis

A: Look at the picture and answer the questions:

1. Can you guess what the legend of Atlantis is going to be about?
2. What do you think people of Atlantis liked to do?



3. According to the picture, do you think the people of Atlantis were rich or poor?

Atlantis is a legendary country. Nobody knows where it was. Nobody knows if the story is true or false. One ancient philosopher, his name(BE) Plato(DESCRIBE) the country and the people of Atlantis in one of his famous book. According to Plato the people of Atlantis..... (STUDY) very hard for all their life. When they were 3 years old they..... (START) to learn to write and read. When they..... (BE) 4 years old they..... (BEGIN) to learn maths, geometry, art and architecture.. When they..... (BE) older they..... (PASS) their exams from many sciences.

People of Atlantis..... (WORK) very hard. They..... (BUILD) amazing buildings, parks, fountains, monuments and temples in their cities. They..... (PAINT) and..... (DECORATE) their houses with gold. They..... (LIVE) in special modern houses with bathrooms and toilets with the functioning water system like nowadays. People..... (WEAR) special clothes from the best materials and very beautiful jewelleries. If the Atlantis..... (EXIST) it is a big mystery. Many people..... (LOOK FOR) it but with no result. Many scientists believe that Atlantis is somewhere under the ocean or somewhere out of our planet Earth. The legend of Atlantis also (MOTIVATE) many writers and scriptwriters. Very popular is for example the American sci-fi serial called Star Gate Atlantis.

B: Answer the question. Only one answer is correct.

1. Who wrote the legend of Atlantis?

- a) Socrates
- b) Aristotle
- c) Homer
- d) Plato

2. When did the children of Atlantis start to learn to write and read according to the legend?

- a) When they were 8 years old
- b) When they were 5 years old
- c) When they were 3 years old
- d) They didn't learn to write and read

3. What material did the people of Atlantis use to decorate their houses according to the legend?

- a) Gold
- b) Silver
- c) Platinum
- d) Paper

4. What unusual device did the people of Atlantis use at that time?

- a) Washing machine
- b) Electricity
- c) Simple computers
- d) Functioning water system

C: Discussion:

1. Would you like to live in Atlantis? Why yes/why not?

2. Which theory of Atlantis you believe or like the most? Why?

D. Conclusion

Questioning in general context as a part of human communication is the important factor of our everyday lives. It is a process of dealing with our knowledge, feelings and relationships. It is the basic tool of human interaction. Interaction is an important precondition for learning and development. At school there is always an interaction between the teacher, the learner and the subject being taught and questioning is an irreplaceable tool in this process. The purpose of asking questions in the educational process is not only to find out what children already know but also to stimulate their learning process. Questioning can be also useful as a reading strategy. „The reason for asking questions during a reading activity is to stimulate recall, to deepen understanding, to develop imagination and to encourage problem solving“ (Brown, Wragg, 1993, p. 3).

The aim of this thesis was to verify the hypothesis that using appropriately chosen, formulated and sequenced questions that fit particular learning situations can involve the learners into the reading process effectively and help them better understand a text. In order to verify this hypothesis I designed a project which was tested at the elementary school of Kynšperk nad Ohří. The project consisted of three reading lessons each of which consisted of reading activities focusing on. These reading activities were focused on beneficial effects of asking questions in the three-stage model of the reading process. I designed a different kinds of questions based on the theoretical principles of the Bloom's taxonomy model of questioning which fit each reading stage (before-reading, during-reading and after-reading stage).

Asking questions in **before-reading stage** helped the learners to gain the gist about the text – “to have some idea of what we are going to read about in order not to begin reading with a completely empty mind” (Doff, 1988, p. 41). This, consequently, helped to make the learners more engaged in their reading as they were given a hint of what was the text going to be about. The aim of asking questions in this stage was also to introduce the topic in an interactive way to make the learners curious and interested in the topic and therefore motivated to read. As the learners were prepared for the reading

itself, they felt secure and conscious of what they could expect from the following step. Asking questions in **during-reading stage** helped the learners to monitor their comprehension by using three basic during reading strategies. In this stage I prompted pupils to infer, predict and visualize by asking appropriate types of questions developing these skills. Asking these types of questions was especially beneficial for those readers who needed more support, time and guidance during the reading to realize some information provided by the text. Moreover, since these questions were proved or disproved at the end of reading, the pupils' expectations were challenged and they became more motivated to continue with reading. This also helped them to better understand what they read. Asking questions in **after-reading stage** helped to strengthen and extend learners' understanding of the text by making connection, returning to text and summarizing. To support these abilities I had developed suitable questions which were asked in the final stage of the reading activity. These questions helped the learners to grasp the text as a whole and realize the purpose, sense or the general meaning of the text. Only after the pupils can identify with the text line or its characters and associate the content with real-life situations, they really benefit from reading, both from the point of view of the language but also personal development.

Each reading activity I designed to verify the hypothesis had the similar structure. I used the same pattern of the three-stage reading model as well as the same kinds of questions in each stage modified according to the topic and content of the text. The aim was to prove that if learners are exposed to regular training in this kind of support they can become more proficient readers. When using the same reading strategy in the same class for a second time, the learners were able to react and answer to the questions promptly as they already knew what they were expected to do. Moreover, when readers learn the strategy which is obviously effective for them, they can accept it as their own and use it also in their independent reading. Supporting greater autonomy is the main aim of teaching reading in foreign language at elementary school.

To evaluate the efficiency of the project it was essential to focus on the actual effects of asking questions to the learners and consequently compare the results of my own observations to the hypothesis. Firstly, I obtained a lot of useful and inspiring findings from reflections from the lesson observations and secondly, I gained valuable feedback

from the learners from a short questionnaire. The questionnaires the learners got after the lesson to evaluate the benefits of questioning as a reading strategy from their point of view were identical for each reading activity. The same pattern of evaluation of the activities enabled the pupils to focus on relevant aspects of the reading process and allowed me to make better comparison of all the lessons and activities.

Considering the results from the learners' reflections and my own observations it can be stated that using appropriate questions in all stages of the reading process were useful and beneficial for the learners as they could understand the text better, especially in the before-reading stage. For example, the 88% of all the learners participating on the project said that they became definitely more interested in the reading activity after questioning in the before-reading stage. The rest of them (12%) said that it was rather helpful for them. The 61% agreed that asking questions to the picture helped them to gain an idea about the content of the text and the 18 % said that the picture was rather helpful for them. Only 21% of the learners said that asking questions to the picture was not so significant for them to understand the text better. Questioning in this stage in particular proved to be the most effective for the learners as it helped to motivate them to start to read the text with an interest and curiosity, which used to be often difficult to achieve. Moreover, as the learners gained the gist about the content of the text, they focused easier on the text and worked more actively also in the next stages. According to the questionnaires, some of the learners appreciated most the questioning in the during-reading stage as they needed more time to realize what they had read to orient better in the number of information the text provided. The 74% of the learners said that asking questions in the during-reading stage helped them to understand and remember the text better. Finally, after-reading questions helped them effectively to realize the purpose or the general meaning of the text. The 71% of the learners said that it was easy for them to answer the question/s in the after-reading stage, which proved that most of the learners were motivated enough to think about the text and make their own opinion or conclusion. For example, using synthetizing question in the end of the reading activity 3 stimulated the learners to think more in depth about the moral of the legend, which would have been otherwise neglected and so understanding the text would have been deficient. This proved that these kinds of questions supported not only reading

process but also the higher level of thinking skills as the learners had to synthesize, summarize, evaluate or apply and analyse in the previous stages of a reading activity.

To sum up, asking questions proved to be an effective strategy developing motivation, interest, better engagement and positive attitude towards reading. It was also surprising that the learners provided answers to my questions in an enthusiastic and imaginative way. For example, to my comprehension question about the most probable behaviour of the people of Atlantis, one boy answered: *“It seems that they probably liked to have a peace there”*. He assumed from the first part of the reading that country which used to be prosperous and fortunate certainly preferred living in a peace and harmony. It was a wonderful proof of independent, creative thinking, which can be achieved by the appropriate stimulation. Moreover, the learners in general considered the reading easier for them when using questioning in all three stages of the reading process. Only 6% of the learners said that they would probably understand the text better without using questions at all. The 94% of the learners agreed that using questions was a useful strategy for their better understanding. Consequently, it can be stated that the project confirmed the hypothesis completely and proved that asking appropriate questions can be a helpful and beneficial strategy for teaching reading in foreign language at elementary schools.

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F. Appendices

Collected data from the questionnaires:

Learner's reflections to the activity 1: The story of Odysseus

Question:	Answers: Total of the learners: 12
1. <i>“Vzbudil rozhovor na základě otázek předcházející četbě tvůj zájem o téma četby?”</i>	ANO - 10 SPÍŠE ANO - 2 SPÍŠE NE - 0 NE - 0
2. <i>“Získal(a) jsi na základě obrázku k textu a následné diskuze k němu lepší představu o tom, o čem bude příběh pojednávat?”</i>	ANO - 12 SPÍŠE ANO - 0 SPÍŠE NE - 0 NE - 0
3. <i>“Pomohl ti rozhovor a otázky, které jsme si kladli v průběhu četby k lepšímu pochopení a zapamatování obsahu textu?”</i>	ANO - 9 SPÍŠE ANO - 2 SPÍŠE NE - 1 NE - 0
4. <i>“Bylo pro tebe snadné odpovědět na poslední otázku?”</i>	ANO - 7 SPÍŠE ANO - 3 SPÍŠE NE - 2 NE - 0
5. <i>“Rozumněl bys textu lépe, kdyby sis jej mohl přečíst sám bez diskuzí a otázek, které jsme si během celého čtení kladli?”</i>	ANO - 0 SPÍŠE ANO - 1 SPÍŠE NE - 4 NE - 7

Learner's reflections to the activity **2: Icarus**

Question:	Answers: Total of the learners: 11
1. <i>“Vzbudil rozhovor na základě otázek předcházející četbě tvůj zájem o téma četby?”</i>	ANO - 11 SPÍŠE ANO - 0 SPÍŠE NE - 0 NE - 0
2. <i>“Získal(a) jsi na základě obrázku k textu a následné diskuze k němu lepší představu o tom, o čem bude příběh pojednávat?”</i>	ANO - 2 SPÍŠE ANO - 4 SPÍŠE NE - 4 NE - 1
3. <i>“Pomohl ti rozhovor a otázky, které jsme si kladli v průběhu četby k lepšímu pochopení a zapamatování obsahu textu?”</i>	ANO - 9 SPÍŠE ANO - 2 SPÍŠE NE - 0 NE - 0
4. <i>“Bylo pro tebe snadné odpovědět na poslední otázku?”</i>	ANO - 8 SPÍŠE ANO - 3 SPÍŠE NE - 0 NE - 0
5. <i>“Rozumněl bys textu lépe, kdyby sis jej mohl přečíst sám bez diskuzí a otázek, které jsme si během celého čtení kladli?”</i>	ANO - 0 SPÍŠE ANO - 0 SPÍŠE NE - 6 NE - 5

Learner's reflections to the activity **3: The legend of Atlantis**

Question:	Answers: Total of the learners: 11
1. <i>“Vzbudil rozhovor na základě otázek předcházející četbě tvůj zájem o téma četby?”</i>	ANO - 9 SPÍŠE ANO - 2 SPÍŠE NE - 0 NE - 0
2. <i>“Získal(a) jsi na základě obrázku k textu a následné diskuze k němu lepší představu o tom, o čem bude příběh pojednávat?”</i>	ANO - 9 SPÍŠE ANO - 2 SPÍŠE NE - 0 NE - 0
3. <i>“Pomohl ti rozhovor a otázky, které jsme si kladli v průběhu četby k lepšímu pochopení a zapamatování obsahu textu?”</i>	ANO - 7 SPÍŠE ANO - 3 SPÍŠE NE - 1 NE - 0
4. <i>“Bylo pro tebe snadné odpovědět na poslední otázku?”</i>	ANO - 9 SPÍŠE ANO - 2 SPÍŠE NE - 0 NE - 0
5. <i>“Rozumněl bys textu lépe, kdyby sis jej mohl přečíst sám bez diskuzí a otázek, které jsme si během celého čtení kladli?”</i>	ANO - 0 SPÍŠE ANO - 1 SPÍŠE NE - 6 NE - 4

Dotazník

Zaškrtni jednu z odpovědí:

1. Vzbudil rozhovor na základě otázek předcházející četbě tvůj zájem o téma četby?

- ☐ Ano
- ☐ Spíše ano
- ☐ Spíše ne
- ☐ Ne

2. Získal(a) jsi na základě obrázku k textu a následné diskuze k němu lepší představu o tom, o čem bude příběh pojednávat?

- ☐ Ano
- ☐ Spíše ano
- ☐ Spíše ne
- ☐ Ne

3. Pomohl ti rozhovor a otázky, které jsme si kladli v průběhu četby k lepšímu pochopení a zapamatování obsahu textu?

- ☐ Ano
- ☐ Spíše ano
- ☐ Spíše ne
- ☐ Ne

4. Bylo pro tebe snadné odpovědět na poslední otázku?

- ☐ Ano
- ☐ Spíše ano
- ☐ Spíše ne
- ☐ Ne

5. Rozuměl bys textu lépe, kdyby sis jej mohl přečíst sám bez diskuzí a otázek, které jsme si během celého čtení kladli?

- ☐ Ano
- ☐ Spíše ano
- ☐ Spíše ne
- ☐ Ne

Děkuji ti za vyplnění dotazníku!

